

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday 23 June 2011

The Speaker (The Hon. Shelley Elizabeth Hancock) took the chair at 10.00 a.m.

The Speaker read the Prayer and acknowledgement of country.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Routine of Business

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [10.00 a.m.]: In the past few days, because of the high volume of Government Business, it has been necessary to move various Government bills through the House and to that end there has been a great deal of cooperation on both sides. I thank the Opposition for its cooperation— notwithstanding the fact that every now and then it had a little go at me, but that is all right. Last week I indicated that some private members' time would be reinstated to allow both Opposition and Government members to present their concerns to the Parliament. Accordingly I propose that the period between 12.15 p.m. and 1.30 p.m. today, time normally reserved for Government Business, will be allocated to private members' statements. I seek the leave of the House to permit the taking of private members' statements from 12.15 p.m. until 1.30 p.m. today.

Leave granted.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Postponement of Business

Notice of Motion (General Notices) No. 18 postponed on motion by Mr Richard Amery on behalf of Ms Carmel Tebbutt.

PARLIAMENTARY, LOCAL COUNCIL AND PUBLIC SECTOR EXECUTIVES REMUNERATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2011

REGIONAL RELOCATION (HOME BUYERS GRANT) BILL 2011

Messages received from the Legislative Council returning the bills without amendment.

STATUTE LAW (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL 2011

Message received from the Legislative Council returning the bill with amendments.

Consideration of Legislative Council's amendment set down as an order of the day for a later hour.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

Establishment and Membership

The SPEAKER: I report the receipt of the following messages from the Legislative Council:

(1) Committee on Children and Young People

Madam SPEAKER

The Legislative Council desires to inform the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution:

1. That under section 27 of the Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998, a joint committee known as the Committee on Children and Young People be appointed.

2. That under section 29 (1) (a) of the Act, Mrs Melinda Pavey, Ms Jan Barham and Mr Greg Donnelly be appointed to serve on the committee as members of the Legislative Council.

Legislative Council
22 June 2011

DON HARWIN
President

(2) Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption

Madam SPEAKER

The Legislative Council desires to inform the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution:

1. That under section 63 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, a joint committee known as the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption be appointed.
2. That under section 65 (1) (a) of the Act, Mr Niall Blair, Ms Lynda Voltz and Revd Mr Fred Nile be appointed to serve on the committee as members of the Legislative Council.

Legislative Council
22 June 2011

DON HARWIN
President

(3) Committee on the Health Care Complaints Commission

Madam SPEAKER

The Legislative Council desires to inform the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution:

1. That under section 64 of the Health Care Complaints Act 1993, a joint committee known as the Committee on the Health Care Complaints Commission be appointed.
2. That under section 67 (1) (a) of the Act, Ms Catherine Cusack, Ms Helen Westwood and Mr Paul Green be appointed to serve on the committee as members of the Legislative Council.

Legislative Council
22 June 2011

DON HARWIN
President

(4) Legislation Review Committee

Madam SPEAKER

The Legislative Council desires to inform the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution:

1. That under section 4 of the Legislation Review Act 1987, a joint committee known as the Legislation Review Committee be appointed.
2. That under section 5 (1) (a) of the Act, Dr Peter Phelps, Mr Shaoquett Moselmane and Mr David Shoebridge be appointed to serve on the committee as members of the Legislative Council.

Legislative Council
22 June 2011

DON HARWIN
President

(5) Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters

Madam SPEAKER

The Legislative Council desires to inform the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution:

1. That this House agrees to the resolution in the Legislative Assembly's Message of Wednesday 22 June 2011 relating to the appointment of a Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters.
2. That the representatives of the Legislative Council on the Joint Standing Committee be Mr Trevor Khan, Mr Peter Phelps, Mr Peter Primrose, Ms Amanda Fazio and Mr Robert Borsak.
3. That the time and place for the first meeting be Thursday 23 June 2011 at 1.00 p.m. in Room 1153.

Legislative Council
22 June 2011

DON HARWIN
President

(6) Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety

Madam SPEAKER

The Legislative Council desires to inform the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution:

1. That this House agrees to the resolution in the Legislative Assembly's Message of Wednesday 22 June 2011 relating to the appointment of a Joint Standing Committee to inquire into and report on road safety in New South Wales.

2. That the representatives of the Legislative Council on the Joint Standing Committee be Mr Walt Secord, Mr Rick Colless and Ms Cate Faehrmann.
3. That the time and place for the first meeting be Thursday 23 June 2011 at 1.20 p.m. in Room 1153.

Legislative Council
22 June 2011

DON HARWIN
President

(7) Joint Standing Committee on the Office of the Valuer-General

Madam SPEAKER

The Legislative Council desires to inform the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution:

1. That this House agrees to the resolution in the Legislative Assembly's message of Wednesday 22 June 2011 relating to the appointment of a Joint Standing Committee on the Office of the Valuer-General.
2. That the representatives of the Legislative Council on the Joint Standing Committee on the Office of the Valuer-General be Mr Scot MacDonald and Mr Eric Roozendaal.
3. That the time and place for the first meeting be Thursday 23 June 2011 at 1.40 p.m. in Room 1153.

Legislative Council
22 June 2011

DON HARWIN
President

CARY STREET, TORONTO

Debate resumed from 2 June 2011.

Mr TIMOTHY OWEN (Newcastle) [10.07 a.m.]: I welcome the opportunity to respond on behalf of the Government to the motion moved by the member for Lake Macquarie and I thank him for raising this important issue. I am advised that the Roads and Traffic Authority has acquired properties along Cary Street, Toronto, over many years. The properties that the Roads and Traffic Authority has acquired have been purchased under hardship or voluntary sales. I understand that the authority has not been actively purchasing properties but has used the opportunities as they have arisen to reserve a future road corridor.

The property acquisitions that have taken place will ensure that impact on property will be minimised when the duplication of Cary Street is required in the future. The remaining property that the Roads and Traffic Authority has not acquired would be acquired by the authority as part of the duplications when the project proceeds. I am advised that the property on Cary Street which is not owned by the Roads and Traffic Authority is currently not impeding the project in any way. The Roads and Traffic Authority has been developing options for the duplication of Main Road 217 between The Boulevarde and Bay Street, and I understand that options will be displayed for community comment in September. Following the public display, community submissions will be considered when finalising the selection of a preferred option. When a preferred option has been decided, the project will be considered for future funding in line with statewide priorities and needs.

Current priorities for the road network in the Hunter region include construction of the \$133 million, 1.8-kilometre section of the Newcastle inner-city bypass between Shortland and Sandgate, which is currently underway and is expected to be completed in 2013; construction of the \$1.7 billion, 40-kilometre Hunter Expressway between Seahampton and Branxton, which is also currently underway and is expected to be opened to traffic in 2013; planning for a number of intersection upgrades along the main route between the F3 freeway and Newcastle; and delivery of a new Thornton Bridge over the Great Northern rail line at Thornton.

The New South Wales Government has also made a number of commitments to improve the road network in the Hunter region. These include funding commitments of \$45 million to upgrade the New England Highway between the Maitland railway station roundabout and the Maitland Hospital roundabout; \$40 million for the duplication of Nelson Bay Road between Bobs Farm and Anna Bay; \$5 million to upgrade Lemon Tree Passage Road; \$20 million to upgrade Main Road 301 between Raymond Terrace and Dungog; \$20 million to upgrade Broke Road and McDonalds Road at Pokolbin; and \$15 million towards the Pennant Street Bridge in Cardiff, together with additional funds from council and the Federal Government. The Roads and Traffic Authority will continue to develop the preferred option for the duplication of Main Road 217 between The Boulevarde and Bay Street for the longer term.

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) [10.10 a.m.]: It is always a delight to have a woman in the Chair. I am very pleased that my colleague the member for Lake Macquarie and mayor of Lake Macquarie raised this

issue. Members should raise these types of issues because they are important to the community and any improvements that result from the debate can have a dramatic effect. If the outcome is good for the Toronto community, I certainly support it. Toronto is a beautiful place of interest to me. When I grew up in the Lake Macquarie area many working-class families in the western suburbs would take holidays or spend a lovely day on the lake at Toronto. It is a beautiful place. Lake Macquarie has the second-largest Aboriginal community in New South Wales, it is the fourth largest community in New South Wales and, as reported in the media recently, it has a great population growth.

Toronto itself is a commercial hub of western Lake Macquarie and one attraction is that it is a mere 10 minute drive from the F3. It is a perfect location for businesses servicing the Central Coast, Newcastle and the wider Hunter region. This is always one of our arguments and strong support for the Glendale road-rail interchange. With the permission of the mayor of Lake Macquarie, I spoke to council officers about Cary Street, Toronto, because it is obviously an area of interest. Council officers are aware that for some time the Roads and Traffic Authority has been considering options associated with the increasing traffic flow on Cary Street, Toronto, which is good. Indeed, I was pleased to hear the member for Newcastle say that the options will be displayed by the Roads and Traffic Authority in September and following that there will be community consultation, which is really important; maybe our discussion today has shortened the time frame for outcomes.

The matters for consideration regarding Cary Street should include a feasibility study on bypass options incorporating the duplication of Fennell Bay Bridge with a route incorporating Cook Street and a connection option at the southern end of Main Road 217, which is Excelsior Parade. We need to look at widening Cary Street to four lanes—two each way—and consider a feasibility study that highlights the impacts on the surrounding local area and road networks because we know that when we increase the size of a road or create a dual carriageway it impacts on other roads. It does not surprise me that this section of Cary Street currently has in excess of 30,000 vehicles per day and experiences significant delays in morning and afternoon peak times. It becomes extremely busy during peak hours when travelling back and forth to Toronto, given that there is only one major road.

We must ensure that the Roads and Traffic Authority focuses on this particular area in Toronto because it is important. Funding initiatives for studies in the area could include community workshops to give Toronto and council the opportunity for input. It is important for the Roads and Traffic Authority and council to work together as council is the grassroots level and has the best knowledge of these issues. I am pleased that the member for Newcastle highlighted the funding for stage four of the Newcastle inner city bypass. I appreciated the State Labor Government funding of \$133 million and \$1.7 billion for the Hunter expressway, which are really important, and I thank both the State Labor and Federal governments for providing funding for those projects. I mention also the need to fund stage five of the inner city bypass from Jesmond to Rankin Park and hope it is in the budget papers of the Government. Cary Street is important. I am pleased that the member for Lake Macquarie raised this issue and that we have a good outcome on behalf of the residents of Toronto.

Mr ANDREW CORNWELL (Charlestown) [10.15 a.m.]: Main Road 217 is the major north-south route along the western side of Lake Macquarie and totals 40 kilometres in length. The Wallsend to Morisset section of Main Road 217 provides main road access for residential, commercial and recreational areas on the western side of Lake Macquarie. It connects western Lake Macquarie to the Newcastle urban area. The first dual carriageways on the route were constructed on Lake Road at Wallsend, closely followed by a section across Winding Creek on Lake Road at Glendale. Construction of the dual carriageway along Lake Road between Main Road, Glendale, and Croudace Road, Elmore Vale, was completed in 2001. In January 2007 the \$50 million 1.7-kilometre Five Islands Bridge upgrade between Speers Point and Booragul was opened to traffic and this has significantly reduced delays along the route. Indeed, Five Islands Bridge would be mentioned daily on the local radio's traffic report.

In addition, in 2008-09 and 2009-10 the Roads and Traffic Authority completed more than \$9 million in safety improvements at three intersections on Main Road 217. The projects at Dorrington Road, Enterprise Way and Donnelly Road were jointly funded by the New South Wales and Federal governments. The Roads and Traffic Authority has reviewed its long-term scheme to widen Main Road 217 along the eastern side of the existing road between Fennell Bay at the Macquarie Road intersection and Rens Street, Booragul. Options have been investigated to widen the road to four lanes along the eastern or western side of the existing route. The Roads and Traffic Authority has identified the western option as the preferred widening of the road as it minimises potential impacts on the local community and the surrounding environment. The options were on public display in July last year and the western option is the preferred option.

The next step will be to display the final preferred route and protect it from future development by assisting Lake Macquarie City Council to include the preferred route corridor in its local environmental plan. Construction of the project is not anticipated in the short term as this section of the route currently operates well since the opening of the Five Islands Bridge project immediately to the north. In February 2011 the Roads and Traffic Authority implemented line marking changes on Cary Street when a one-kilometre section of Main Road 217 was resurfaced. The changes included removal of a merging lane near James Street, providing a double right turn out of Victory Parade and changes to the lane configuration northbound at Bay Street. The Roads and Traffic Authority has been reviewing the effects of these changes during April and May 2011.

In addition, the Roads and Traffic Authority continues to plan for the future upgrade of Main Road 217 between Toronto and Booragul. This includes the Cary Street section between The Boulevarde and Bay Street. The Roads and Traffic Authority has been developing options, which I am advised will be displayed for community comment in September. Following the public display, community submissions will be considered before selection of a preferred option. Future funding for the project will be considered in line with statewide priorities and needs. The Roads and Traffic Authority is planning for the future of Main Road 217 in Toronto and community involvement will be an important part of the process to ensure it adequately meets the long-term needs.

The Roads and Traffic Authority is also investigating other short-term options to reduce congestion and improve traffic flow along Cary Street, including possible adjustments to line marking and signal phasing. In conclusion, I welcome the motion. The previous Government failed to progress this project in a timely manner. The road runs parallel to the F3 and these roads are the backbone of western Lake Macquarie. Main Road 217 services one of the most rapidly growing areas of the Hunter and the failure of the previous Government to progress this and other projects in this area of Lake Macquarie is appalling. The O'Farrell Government will restore the State's finances to ensure that important projects such as improvements to Main Road 217 and State Route 133 are addressed in a timely manner.

Although the former Government produced the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy, which identified western Lake Macquarie as a major growth corridor, it sat on its hands and allowed infrastructure on the western side of Lake Macquarie to be developed at a snail's pace. Other projects that the former Government promised over and over again include the Glendale interchange, which was another piece of Labor's virtual infrastructure program—why build it, when you can announce it every four years? In conclusion, I welcome the motion because it concerns an important road project that affects my constituents as well as the constituents of the member for Wallsend, the member for Newcastle and, most importantly, the member for Lake Macquarie who travel on that roadway every day.

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) [10.19 a.m.], in reply: I thank the member for Newcastle, the member for Wallsend and the member for Charlestown for their contributions to debate on the motion relating to Cary Street, Toronto. I was particularly pleased to be able to give the member for Newcastle an opportunity to speak on all regional projects within a 100-kilometre radius of Cary Street. That is all well and good: We all live in the same community, and we will all benefit from the work that will be done. However, the motion relates to a very specific area. I believe it is within the capacity of the Roads and Traffic Authority, even with some minor adjustments to its regular programming, to carry out the work that the local residents of Toronto and beyond, as well as regular users of that road, expect.

The road has undergone some improvements, as acknowledged by the member for Charlestown, but I have to say that the roadworks could not be categorised as overall improvement. The problem is not so much the surface quality of the road, which is now quite good, but relates to the nature of the lanes, the number of intersections that all occur within a short distance of each other, and the consequential driving behaviour that the situation produces. I have had discussions with the Roads and Traffic Authority relating to these problems in the past. I state for the record that it is very difficult to have a useful discussion with the Roads and Traffic Authority. The government of the day should address the culture within the Roads and Traffic Authority that sets aside the community and its local elected representatives in any discussion about what is happening.

As the local parliamentary representative, I am very pleased to hear the member for Newcastle and the member for Charlestown inform me that there will be an exhibition of design in September. That is wonderful. I thank the member for Newcastle and the member for Charlestown for that information. I do not know why it would be so difficult for local Roads and Traffic Authority representatives to have that conversation and build some kind of relationship with parliamentary representatives. It will not be a relationship that will guarantee anything or represent any promises being given to a local member of Parliament: The intention is simply to open dialogue with the local member of Parliament as a representative of the people.

From January 2006 to July 2009, approximately 64 significant or major accidents occurred in the Cary Street location. That is a very substantial number and it relates to the street conditions from The Boulevard to James Street, an alternative for people who turn west towards Blackalls Park to attend the Toronto Polyclinic or the Toronto Workers Club, particularly during the afternoon peak when the intersection is dangerous. That stretch of roadway coincides very closely with two other intersections, particularly the traffic-light controlled Victory Parade, but that intersection creates problems in its own right. People lane jump at that location.

I believe the solution is within reach for the Roads and Traffic Authority. While only one property needs to be acquired by the Roads and Traffic Authority, many more things could be done besides immediate road widening. As the member for Charlestown said, the Roads and Traffic Authority should re-examine the line marking and the signal phasing in that area. The south-western area of Lake Macquarie is a high growth area. The former State Government, and in particular the Roads and Traffic Authority, failed to deliver appropriate infrastructure to meet the needs of the area. Rocket science is not involved in fixing the problems. I again call on the Government to pursue resolution of these problems and perhaps inspire the Roads and Traffic Authority to elevate the status of the roadworks for the sake of people who live in western Lake Macquarie.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

INTERNATIONAL NO DIET DAY

Ms CHERIE BURTON (Kogarah) [10.25 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) notes that the International No Diet Day is an annual celebration of body acceptance and body shape diversity;
- (2) notes that this day is also dedicated to promoting a healthy lifestyle and raising awareness of the dangers and futility of dieting;
- (3) notes that International No Diet Day is observed on 6 May 2011; and
- (4) calls on Members to promote this day and its significant messages within their local communities.

International No Diet Day was created by Mary Evans Young in 1992. Mary is the director of the British group, Diet Breakers. After personally experiencing anorexia, she wanted to help people to appreciate themselves for who they are and to appreciate the body they have. Young, a British feminist, was motivated by her own experience of being pilloried at school for being fat and by speaking with women who attended her management courses. In her book, *Diet Breaking: Having It All Without Having To Diet*, Mary tells the story of one of the courses in 1991 when she became particularly irritated by the coffee break conversation about whether or not women would eat a biscuit: "Oh, I'll just have one."; "I shouldn't really."; "Oh, all right then."

When Mary Evans asked the group, "What do you think would happen if you spent as much time and energy on your careers as you do on your diet?" it was as though she had struck a match. Everyone wanted to discuss it and everyone had something to say. As a result she began running Do You Really Need to Diet courses, which became very popular. There are two other incidents that strengthened her desire to expose the futility of dieting. A television program depicted three women who were having their stomachs stapled in an effort to become thin. None of them received any counselling before undergoing that major surgery. One of the women split her staples, regained the weight, and underwent the operation again—three times, in fact.

Mary found the program unbelievably distressing. The physical and emotional pain of these women and the depth of their self-loathing was more than she could bear. It was not until the following day, after having cried herself to sleep, that she realised she was upset for herself as well, and that she had experienced very deep self-loathing. The other incident occurred approximately a month later when she read a newspaper report about a teenager who had hanged herself because she was bullied for being fat. She was a mere size 14. In May 1992 Mary introduced the first No Diet Day. Originally it was intended to be National No Diet Day, but a week before the event International Clear Your Desk Day had been declared, and that inspired her to declare International No Diet Day.

Essentially, International No Diet Day is an opportunity to celebrate the beauty and diversity of all of our natural sizes and shapes and to affirm everybody's right to self-esteem, respect, emotional and physical

wellbeing; to declare a personal one-day moratorium on diet-weight obsession; to learn the facts about weight loss, dieting, health and body size; recognising how dieting perpetuates violence against women; honour the victims of eating disorders and weight loss surgery; and help to end weight discrimination, sizeism and fat phobia. Each year since its origin in 1992 International No Diet Day has been celebrated by body liberation anti-diet and other activist groups and individuals around the world who want to empower people of all sizes.

Events and activities have been held in cities and towns spanning the globe. I provide the following interesting statistics. The average woman is 5'4" in height, weighs about 70 kilograms and wears a size 14 dress. The ideal woman portrayed by models, Miss America, Barbie dolls and screen actresses is 5'7" tall, weighs about 50 kilograms and wears size 8. One-third of all women wear a size 16 or larger; 75 per cent of women are dissatisfied with their appearance; 50 per cent are dieting at any one time; and between 90 and 99 per cent of reducing diets fail to produce permanent weight loss. Two-thirds of dieters regain the weight lost within one year, and virtually all will regain that lost weight in five years.

The diet industry—diet foods, programs, drugs et cetera—takes in over \$40 billion each year and it is growing. Quick weight loss schemes are among the most common consumer frauds, and diet programs have the highest customer dissatisfaction rate in any service industry. A recent survey found that only 30 per cent of 250 randomly chosen women aged 21 to 35 years had normal bone mass. The researchers concluded that women are so afraid that eating dairy products will make them gain weight they starve themselves into osteoporosis. Young girls are more afraid of becoming fat than they are of nuclear war, cancer or losing their parents; 50 per cent of nine-year-old and 80 per cent of 10-year-old girls have dieted; 90 per cent of high school students diet regularly, even though only between 10 and 15 per cent are over the weight recommended by the standard height-weight charts; 1 per cent of teenage girls and 5 per cent of university-aged women become anorexic or bulimic; and, at up to 20 per cent, anorexia has the highest mortality rate of any psychiatric diagnosis.

The top 10 reasons to give up dieting are, starting at the top, diets do not work. Even if weight is lost, it probably will be regained later, perhaps even more than was lost. Diets are expensive. Diets are boring—people on diets talk and think about food and practically nothing else; there is a lot more to life. Diets do not necessarily improve health—like the weight loss, health improvement is temporary. Dieting actually can cause health problems. Diets do not make you beautiful—very few people will ever look like models. Glamour is a look, not a size. People do not have to be thin to be attractive. Diets are not sexy. To be more attractive take more care of your body and appearance. Feeling healthy makes you look your best. Diets can turn into eating disorders. Diets make you afraid of food. Food nourishes and comforts us, and gives us pleasure. Dieting can make food seem like an enemy and deprive you of all the positive things about food. Finally, diets can rob you of energy.

Learning to love and accept oneself will give you self-confidence, better health, and a sense of wellbeing to last a lifetime. On a personal note, and the reason I was happy to accept the shadow ministry for healthy lifestyles, is that since having my two children in quick succession—both were big boys at birth—I have struggled with my weight for the first time in my life. When I was studying about International No Diet Day I thought it was a novel concept that for once we would be telling people to embrace their looks and be comfortable with their appearance, because health is the most important thing. Feeling healthy, doing a bit of exercise and eating the right foods means that you can have that biscuit or piece of cake. Obviously, I still enjoy those things.

Dr Geoff Lee: A Tim Tam packet.

Ms CHERIE BURTON: No, Mint Slice is my weakness. On 6 May I had a few of those biscuits to celebrate International No Diet Day. It is important to recognise the difference between eating healthily and looking after yourself and going on these crazy fad diets. They can become an obsession and develop into life-consuming problems such as anorexia or bulimia, which are also extremely life-threatening. I join with everyone in the House in saying that we need to do all we can in our local communities to raise awareness of the need for health eating as opposed to dieting.

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) [10.35 a.m.]: I am delighted to respond on behalf of the Government on this motion and pleased to join with the member for Kogarah to highlight this novel day and its significant messages. International No Diet Day is an annual celebration of body acceptance and body shape diversity. It also is a day dedicated to promoting a healthier lifestyle and raising awareness of the dangers and absolute futility of dieting. As the member for Kogarah mentioned, International No Diet Day was observed on 6 May and the light blue ribbon is the designated symbol as nominated by the founder, Mary Evans Young.

There certainly is no shortage of fad diets: they are widely promoted in magazines, on television and online. These diets might provide short-term results but often they are difficult to sustain and ultimately can deprive the body of essential nutrients that only a healthy balanced diet can offer. As already mentioned, fad diets can cause health problems as they often cut out foods and nutrients that our bodies need. Fad diets can cause dehydration, weakness and fatigue, nausea and headaches, constipation, and inadequate vitamin and mineral intake. Sadly, fad diets are portrayed as a magic bullet for weight loss. A recent example is the recently released film *Fat, Sick and Nearly Dead* that centres on filmmaker Joe Cross's dramatic weight loss during a two-month span of drinking nothing but juice.

This is not the sort of message we should promote. Fad dieting is a pressure we do not need in our lives. Fad diets are unrealistic, promote unbalanced and unhealthy eating habits, and generally are difficult to follow for the long term. Often fad diets that promise rapid weight loss will result in the weight being regained just as quickly. It is not difficult to change lifestyle to maintain a healthy weight: it is all about balanced eating and exercise. Eating a healthy diet means eating in moderation from a wide variety of nutritious foods, including plenty of vegetables and fruits, wholegrain cereals, lean meat, fish and poultry, reduced fat dairy products, plenty of water—eight glasses per day for adults is recommended; I wish I could say I did that—and limiting foods high in fat, salt and added sugar.

Healthy lifestyle programs and policies delivered by the O'Farrell-Stoner Government are founded on the strong evidence base provided by the Australian *Guide to Health Eating* and the Australian *Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents*. The O'Farrell-Stoner Government is committed to promoting healthy lifestyles through good nutrition, physical activity, and achieving and maintaining a healthy weight. It is recommended that we undertake 30 minutes of moderate exercise on all or most days of the week. I congratulate a number of women in this House on their exercise regime. The member for Menai, the member for Mulgoa and the member for Blue Mountains and I are currently participating in the Go Red for Women Healthy Heart Challenge. We exercise for 30 minutes every day.

The member for Mulgoa and I were discussing that sometimes we do not get to exercise in 30-minute blocks, so we do lots of running up and down the House stairs. Rates of overweight and obesity in the community remain unacceptably high, with approximately 23 per cent of New South Wales schoolchildren classified as overweight or obese. More than half the New South Wales adult population—52.5 per cent—are classified as overweight or obese. The overwhelming evidence shows that maintaining a healthy weight can prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes, reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke, lower blood pressure and cholesterol—both risk factors for heart disease—and improve mental health.

The New South Wales Government will build on existing healthy eating, physical activity and healthy weight initiatives as it delivers, from 1 July this year, the healthy children initiative under the National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health. The agreement will bring more than \$100 million over four years to provide in New South Wales evidence-based programs supporting the health of children and adults through targeting chronic disease risk factors such as smoking and promoting healthy weight, eating fresh fruit and vegetables, and physical activity. The Childhood Physical Activity and Healthy Weight Program will be delivered in a variety of settings, such as play groups, child-care services and schools, and will involve the enhancement of a statewide rollout of existing evidence-based programs that promote physical activity and healthy nutrition by children. In addition to the statewide rollout of existing programs, new initiatives that address the promotion of physical activity and healthy nutrition through community education and sporting club settings will be developed.

The National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health will also bring \$46 million to New South Wales for investment in programs in workplaces that support healthy lifestyles. The Healthy Workers Initiative will have a strong focus on supporting working adults to achieve lifestyle change by achieving and maintaining a healthy weight, consuming two serves of fruit and five serves of vegetables a day, undertaking at least 30 minutes of physical activity five times a week, and quitting smoking. Healthy workers programs are currently being developed and will target workers in industry sectors and communities that have a high prevalence of chronic disease risk factors. The O'Farrell-Stoner Government is committed to preventive health, driving down avoidable hospital admissions and promoting improved health in the community through healthy lifestyle choices. I commend the Government for its commitment, and I look forward to working as part of this team to maintain a focus on this important issue.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [10.45 a.m.]: I support the motion on International No Diet Day. The purpose of the day is the celebration of body acceptance and body shape diversity. The day is also dedicated to

promoting a healthy lifestyle, raising awareness and encouraging us to become empowered to appreciate our bodies. No Diet Day promotes the acceptance that people are different, come in all shapes and sizes. The origins of the day date back to 1992. No Diet Day was established by Mary Evans Young, the director of the British anti-diet campaign Diet Breakers. Mary was the victim of childhood bullying and fought to overcome anorexia. As a result of Mary's awareness of people being unhappy with their body image she decided to initiate action. This day is not one that advocates unhealthy eating. The goals of International No Diet Day are:

- to celebrate natural body diversity
- to promote positive body image and self esteem in people of all shapes and sizes
- to advocate for non restrictive, healthy eating patterns and non-punitive physical activities for everybody
- to challenge cultural attitudes and values that contribute to body hatred, weight pre-occupation and eating disorders
- to encourage positive body diverse images throughout the media
- to increase awareness of the dangers of weight-loss dieting and the social, emotional and physical consequences of food, size and weight obsessions
- to educate the public about the dangers of weight loss surgery, diet drugs and size biased medical treatment.

One does not need to walk far to see or hear the words "diet", "fat free" or "percentages of fat free" in our community. The world has become obsessed to the point where diet forms part of our daily life. I am not an advocate of unhealthy eating habits but, rather, eat mindfully and enjoying the taste of food. Anti-diet groups exist primarily to assist and support people who suffer illnesses such as anorexia in their efforts to shed fat and be thin. After much medical documentation of health problems resulting from diet medication and surgery International No Diet Day heavily advocates that efforts to be thin should not come at the risk to one's health.

International No Diet Day states, "For all to consciously ignore or choose not to buy magazines or tabloids that promote unhealthy stereotypes, the latest fad diet or celebrity weight loss or body-related headlines". In my experiences as a teacher I witnessed firsthand how children are affected by the media. Unfortunately, during my teaching years my colleagues and I had to deal with the consequences of eating disorders in both male and female students. Images fed to children about ideal body shape have a negative impact on them. Children need to be celebrated for who they are, not who they should be or who they should look like. The Equilibri website states:

Watch your language and be careful about negative self-talk particularly around children and young adults—lead by example and always promote a positive body image and an environment where the word "diet" and "good" and "bad" foods does not exist.

When I was a pastoral care coordinator in the Fairfield district I ran a body image seminar for year 8 boys and girls. During the 90-minute seminar boys and girls were presented with body images, and we had activities ranging from celebrity identification to follow-up discussions. Students were shown images and then they discussed what made those people who they are; it was not about their images. We also brainstormed about the ideal body image and body type. It was interesting to hear the young year 8 students presenting their understanding about positive images. During the seminar we presented two magazine covers, a male magazine and a female magazine, and the students discussed what was wrong with the body image presented in those magazines. Also, students were able to discuss the media's impact on them and the perception of the ideal body type. International No Diet Day has been celebrated around the globe since 1993, in Australia, Canada, England, Germany, New Zealand, Norway, Russia, South Africa and across the United States.

Mrs ROZA SAGE (Blue Mountains) [10.50 a.m.]: I acknowledge International No Diet Day. I totally support the initiative, and I thank the member for Kogarah for moving this motion. As has already been said, International No Diet Day celebrates the diversity of all our natural body sizes and shapes, and offers one's body a right to self-esteem, respect and emotional and physical wellbeing. It offers a day to learn facts about weight loss dieting, health and body size. It also honours victims of eating disorders and weight loss surgery. We need to end weight discrimination, sizeism and fat phobia. Diet in itself has been portrayed incorrectly. Diet is what people eat, but today's connotation of diet centres on weight loss.

As part of the Healthy Heart Challenge, the Go Red for Women campaign, I chose to take the challenge of eating healthy. That is a challenge in this place, trying to forage for healthy food. Today's western society is obsessed with image, especially the female image. We have images in magazines, images of movie stars, and images through the media. Having raised three girls, I can talk with some authority about how difficult it is to

challenge some of these images. Fashion has changed over the centuries. Many years ago curvaceous and plump were considered most desirable. Today the obsession with a thin body shape is often blamed on the fashion catwalks. Again I talk with some authority as my oldest daughter has done fashion design and I have seen what happens in the industry. Size 10 in a fashion catwalk model is fat. Anything below that size is seen as desirable. The underlying story with these models is often quite different: dieting to stay thin, with substance abuse and bad eating habits. All of these images pervade women's magazines.

Pressure on women in particular to conform to the desired body size is immense. The obsession with body size has led to an epidemic of eating disorders. The most commonly known ones are anorexia and bulimia. International No Diet Day raises awareness of these eating disorders and promotes loving your body and yourself and increasing your self-esteem. Sadly, these eating disorders are most prevalent among teenage girls, although other groups and men suffer from these diseases. As well as anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa there is a third category of eating disorder not otherwise specified, which includes binge eating disorder. Unlike bulimics, binge eaters do not purge or exercise or fast excessively and are characterised by being overweight and obese. Eating disorders are real, treatable medical illnesses with complex underlying causes. There is no definite cause but there is some genetic component to a person's tendency to get the disorder.

Some evidence links to dysfunction in part of the brain that regulates metabolism, with imbalances in certain brain chemicals. There are multiple underlying other risk factors including personality traits of high levels of negative feeling, perfectionism and poor self-image, as well as feeding problems in infancy and a general history of undereating when young. They are more likely to have been victims of childhood abuse. In coexistence with all these disorders are other psychiatric disorders such as depression, substance abuse and anxiety. Members can see how serious, multiple and complex this problem is. There are a range of treatments depending on the degree of severity of the illness, from hospitalisation to behaviour modification and psychological counselling, and they are tailored to the patient's needs. Recovery is a long process. I strongly support the motion relating to International No Diet Day. It is a very serious issue and one about which the community needs to be made more aware.

Ms CHERIE BURTON (Kogarah) [10.55 a.m.], in reply: I thank the member for Port Macquarie and the member for Blue Mountains for their contributions and congratulate them as well as the member for Mulgoa and the member for Menai for taking part in the Healthy Heart Challenge. I look forward to seeing the challenge promoted more broadly. I also thank the member for Fairfield for his fantastic contribution and for highlighting that International No Diet Day is not just an issue for women; men also have eating and health issues. I have just been watching Shane Jacobson lose 20 kilograms in the Jen for Men program. It is a struggle we all have and I thank the member for Fairfield for highlighting that and for his work with young boys to educate them about body image.

Of course, International No Diet Day is about celebrating beauty and diversity as well as self-esteem, respect and emotional and physical wellbeing. The great thing about New South Wales—indeed about Australia—is that we have many fun runs, biathlons, triathlons, and cycling competitions that are fun. For example, there is the women's Triathlon Pink and women's and men's cycling events that are not long distance events but that also raise funds for charity, which is a great thing. As the shadow Minister for Healthy Lifestyles I intend to run big campaigns for healthy canteens. My eldest son starts school next year so I will be keeping an eye on his canteen, that is for sure. During the break I will be competing in the 10 kilometre Gold Coast Airport Marathon, the City to Surf, the Blackmores Sydney Running Festival and, finally, the New York City Marathon in November, where I will be raising money for a variety of children's charities. Anybody wanting to make a donation should go to my website.

It is important that we lead by example. I also struggle to meet the target of drinking eight glasses of water a day. If we set an example and promote a healthy lifestyle it will assist people. We can raise money for charity and do something worthwhile as well as get fit and healthy, all of which is great for one's self-esteem. As politicians we need to question the media and women's magazines about the way pictures of women are airbrushed so that the way they are portrayed to us is not the way they look in real life. The distressing stories of children as young as seven and eight putting themselves on diets are quite appalling. It is of concern that people think that the only way to get love and acceptance in society is if you are thin and beautiful and living up to an image of people that is not real.

On International No Diet Day we as leaders in our communities need to check whether we are promoting those images or whether we are taking up the challenge and ensuring we are doing things to bring about change in the media and women's magazines so that they promote normal body image rather than

something that is completely unachievable. I thank all the members who have spoken and I thank the Parliament. I hope we will continue to do all we can to stop women and men from falling into the trap of not eating properly, becoming anorexic or bulimic and not following a nutritious, healthy diet and an exercise plan.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE, JOHN HUNTER CAMPUS, TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) [11.00 a.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) notes that Ronald McDonald House at the John Hunter Hospital Campus recently celebrated its twentieth anniversary by honouring the "heart of the house"; and
- (2) congratulates all volunteers, donors and supporters on their contribution to this home away from home for over 12,000 country families.

What does one do when one has a sick child? How does the family deal with sickness when they live a long way from a specialist hospital? Where does the family stay? How much will it cost? Can they afford it? That is what people think of in times of illness. Thankfully, Ronald McDonald House opened its doors at around the same time as the John Hunter Hospital Campus—1991—and has grown to accommodate well over 800 families per year. Ronald McDonald House is centrally located on the John Hunter Hospital Campus, as it should be, which means that families they can go back to Ronald McDonald House when they need a little bit of time out. It is a home away from home. The goal of Ronald McDonald House is to enable people who have sick children to maintain the routine of their daily lives. The house contains 18 comfortably furnished units and the duration of stay is more than one day.

The heart of Ronald McDonald House is the 230-plus volunteers who kindly donate their time to the house, the children and their families. The house has lots of visitors, such as students from Kotara High School. Sometimes members from my local Rotary Club prepare and cook evening meals for the families of sick children. Fundraising is vital to the functioning and growth of this house. A knitting group makes lots of items for the kids and families. Recently I read about different activity groups in the Hunter, like many of my colleagues, one of which is called the Stitch and Bitch group. When the member for Lake Macquarie and I retire I thought perhaps we could join that group and talk about politics while we are knitting. How about that? Many other groups do vital work for families such as creating toiletry packs and providing blankets. I am a patron of my local Red Cross, which makes toiletry packs for pregnant women in hospitals. Morning teas are held to raise funds for the house.

Ronald McDonald House has big expansion plans over the next five years. It has a family room in the John Hunter Hospital, bedrooms in Tamworth and outreaches elsewhere. It has a family retreat at Forster for families of sick children, who need respite just like everyone else. Education is really important. Ronald McDonald House provides a free tutoring program at the hospital. The aim of the tutoring is to keep the children up-to-date with their school work so that they do not fall too far behind and get them back on track. Another important aspect of education is the Charlie Bell scholarship, a \$5,000 grant to a young person with a serious illness who is about to leave school, which gives that person the opportunity to get a head start at either TAFE or university. I advise the House that applications for the scholarship are now open: they close in November. Anne—the mother of Lisa, a staffer in my electorate office—who is a volunteer at Ronald McDonald House, said this about volunteering:

I have been volunteering at Ronald McDonald House for just over three years now and it has been one of the most rewarding experiences in my life. I can't speak highly enough of the staff who are such kind and friendly people. They make you feel part of everything that is going on, and it is great to be able to provide any kind of support or comfort to people in their time of need.

I received a letter in the following terms from Lucinda about her experience with Ronald McDonald House:

In my 29th week of pregnancy with my first child I was rushed from a small hospital to the John Hunter Hospital with only the clothes on my back and my husband to hold my hand. My little girl was born the next day and given tiny odds of survival. I have never felt more alone in my entire life.

While I recovered from complications from an emergency caesarean, my husband slept on the fold out lounge in my hospital room before the social worker mentioned Ronald McDonald House to us. Within 24 hours my husband had been offered a room, fed a decent meal and I was given gate leave to have a family dinner with him over at the House.

From the second I walked into the House I felt like I was at home. The volunteers and staff not only gave me somewhere to eat, sleep and live close to my daughter, they made me feel welcome, cared for and were always available for a chat, or a shoulder to cry on. During the three months we stayed at Ronald McDonald House we became close to quite a few volunteers who would rush in every shift to find out how our little girl was going. While our friends and family stressed along with us, the people at Ronald McDonald House were always calm, accepting and reassuring; they kept us centred when our loved ones were consumed with their own worries. They cooked for us, cleaned for us and supported us in so many different way.

The fact that we were able to utilise Ronald McDonald House made such a difference to our experience of the first few months of parenthood and made what was such a difficult time, much easier. Without Ronald McDonald House we would have been separated from our newborn baby, travelling long distances to be by her side, or spending all our money on motel accommodation.

Believe me, that is hard to get in the Newcastle area.

Being able to stay at Ronald McDonald House, within a 5 minute walk, or a 60 second run, from our little baby's bedside, meant that we were never far from her and helped strengthen the bond with our little girl and enabled us to feel more like parents.

Nearly five years on we have remained in contact with the staff and volunteers at Ronald McDonald House. We have had numerous stays where our daughter has fallen suddenly ill and been transferred to John Hunter without warning. Within minutes of arriving at the hospital we have been offered accommodation at the House and been welcomed back with open arms. Words cannot express how thankful we are for the fact that Ronald McDonald House, the staff and volunteers exist, we will be forever grateful.

Lucinda has expressed how people feel about their vulnerability when stressed about their sick child, and the importance of the services provided by the volunteers, who are the heart of Ronald McDonald House. I wish Ronald McDonald House a happy twentieth birthday. I thank all of the kind and wonderful volunteers. I look forward to helping them, as I am sure will all of my Hunter colleagues, with the expansion of the campus, which is becoming increasingly squeezed for space. However, I am sure we will find ways around that because people need a home away from home. I look forward to the rest of the debate.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) [11.05 a.m.]: I am delighted to support the motion moved by the member for Wallsend to mark the twentieth anniversary of Ronald McDonald House in Newcastle. Tamworth has a very special Ronald McDonald House and I will address that shortly. Ronald McDonald House Charities have been helping seriously ill children and their families since 1981. This year Ronald McDonald House Charities in Australia celebrate their thirtieth anniversary. The first Ronald McDonald House opened in 1985 and took a step on a journey that has helped and supported more than 65,000 families, which is quite extraordinary. Since that first house they have found ways to help seriously ill children and their families who need the most intensive care and support at very difficult times, particularly in regional areas where long distances have to be travelled.

Ronald McDonald House provides outreach for mothers, fathers and carers, quite often for only an hour or two. Ronald McDonald House provides laundry facilities, which can be a great help to parents or carers when a child is sick. The house gives them a place to take a well-deserved break and gives them a chance to reconnect. The Ronald McDonald House Charities opened in 1981 and have grown to provide many programs to help seriously ill children and their families. Ronald McDonald House has a fantastic network of fundraising opportunities across the board. Gala balls that are held across Australia have raised in excess of \$2.8 million for the Ronald McDonald House Charities. A Silk Road Charity Ball held at Burswood raised more than \$700,000 and charity balls held in New South Wales and Victoria were equally as impressive, raising \$665,000 and \$427,000 respectively. They were fundraising records.

Those significant sums reflect the compassion and the high regard in which the community holds Ronald McDonald House Charities right across Australia. The charities hold a Silly Socks for Kids Days, which is fantastic, and a McHappy Day when a percentage of funds from all burgers sold through McDonald's restaurants go to Ronald McDonald House Charities. Tamworth has ensured that the money raised in Tamworth McDonald's restaurants stays in Tamworth for the Ronald McDonald House, Tamworth—it is important to keep financial community support within the community that generates it.

I would like to tell the House about the newest member of the Ronald McDonald House family, the house at Tamworth. This magnificent facility opened its doors in 2008 and continues to thrive. Occupancy at that five-bedroom house has topped 100 per cent for a number of months over many years. The majority of houses around the country have also been close to maximum capacity at various times of the year. That says, first, that this facility is needed. Of course, you would rather it was not needed, but it is there if needed. It is like a rescue helicopter: you know it is necessary, but you do not want to have to call on it. That is like the Ronald McDonald House family.

Ronald McDonald House at Tamworth is on the grounds of Tamworth Base Hospital. What is special about this House is that it was built in three days. The community support to get the house up and running was quite phenomenal. There is a rather long waiting period to have one of these houses built given regulations, procedures, and occupational health and safety provisions and everything else that goes with building a house of this type. The member for Orange will tell us shortly about his bid to get a Ronald McDonald house in Orange. We went to see the board of Ronald McDonald House in Sydney and said we wanted to build a Ronald McDonald House. They said it would take some time. We said we had the manpower and equipment and were ready to roll, so could they let us build it. They matched us dollar for dollar. In three days the facility was up and running. More than 50 tradespeople worked around the clock, and the double-brick walls of this five-bedroom house went up in 2½ hours. I am showing a photograph of the construction.

Up to 40 bricklayers were working on the project at the same time. They started on the corners and worked their way up, with each corner having a team of 10 bricklayers; in 2½ hours they had the sides of the house built. That was quite extraordinary. The house has five bedrooms, includes volunteers overnight accommodation, paved courtyards, a playroom, lounge, dining and kitchen facilities, a commercial laundry, learning program office, manager's office, quiet room, property room, reception, two storage areas, and an outdoor living area with a covered playground. Often, a covered playground is not included, but it was critical in the plans for Ronald McDonald House Tamworth because siblings will often accompany the parents. At times it can be stressful for the carer, mother or father visiting a sick child if they have to look after siblings as well. The siblings need an area where they can relax. The playroom has DVDs and all sorts of things that make it a home away from home.

We certainly appreciated the efforts of volunteers, particularly those who worked on the Tamworth house. The community spirit is overwhelming. Since its inception in 2008, 560 families from the New England alone have been accommodated in the house. That is the equivalent to 4,500 bed nights. More than 100 volunteers staff the house 24 hours a day. As well as the rooms for the sick kids, their families and carers, there is also a dedicated room for the overnight volunteer. We made sure volunteers were catered for in a safe, secure environment. Ronald McDonald House Tamworth is a home away from home for families of seriously ill children being treated at hospital and it is paramount that the facility is close to the children's ward.

When the house was opened in 2008, all the board of Ronald McDonald House, including its Chief Executive Officer, Malcolm Coutts, came to Tamworth for the opening. Instead of having a politician or official cut the ribbon, we had a young cancer patient come up from the hospital to cut the ribbon. He loved fishing, so we presented him with a fishing rod, donated by one of our local fishing tackle shops. He came up in his wheelchair, cut the ribbon to open Ronald McDonald House Tamworth and was presented with the fishing rod. It was a very moving ceremony.

Sadly, the young boy has since passed away. But those memories will stay with us. So will the reason for building the house—Ronald McDonald House Charities are so important to families right around Australia. These facilities look after not only the kids with illnesses but also their families that are impacted. In regional New South Wales, families know of the love, care and support that are there for them when they have a child who is sick, and they could not ask for any better. I am a big supporter of Ronald McDonald House Charities and I wish them every success in their next 30 years. I put my hand up: if they ever need me, all they have to do is call and I will be there to support them. They have my full support.

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) [11.15 a.m.]: I am pleased to be able to support the member for Wallsend in acknowledging the twentieth anniversary of the Hunter's Ronald McDonald House, situated in the grounds of Newcastle's John Hunter Hospital. There would be very few of us who would be unaware of the existence of Ronald McDonald House Charities, more commonly known to us through our areas as Ronald McDonald House. The houses are the cornerstone of the McDonald's charities, which include the Family Room program in hospitals, the Family Retreat program offering families a well-deserved break, the Learning Program to help children back into the routine of school, and the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile program, which takes specialised healthcare professionals to children in regional areas.

Those of us who have been fortunate enough not to have been directly impacted by a child's serious illness can only imagine the awful apprehension and tremendous strain that is placed on the members of a family when a child is diagnosed with cancer, leukaemia, or other life-threatening illness that requires treatment that may need to continue for months or even years. It is a time when parents and families need support in a variety of areas and coping becomes more difficult, if not impossible, when a child is hospitalised far from home and the family's support network. Even when the illness is not life threatening, the demands on managing the needs of the child, the pervasive anxiety and emotional impact, weighs on parents, families and friends.

Newcastle's Ronald McDonald House, one of the first of 13 across Australia to open its doors, offers that support. It is a haven for local families and those from the Central Coast and northern New South Wales, offering a homelike environment and volunteers with compassion and understanding in what is a challenging time. Despairing and apprehensive parents and the siblings of sick children are welcomed into a place of comfort, when they are most in need. Some stay a night, others for more than a year. The house enables country families with a child undergoing treatment for cancer or other serious illnesses to stay together in a safe and comfortable environment during treatment, close to the hospital. Its caring volunteers help families overcome the stresses associated with a child's illness by encouraging supportive interaction with other parents in a homelike environment.

Since opening its doors in 1991 the Newcastle house has cared for almost 12,000 families and has grown to accommodate more than 800 families a year. It has 18 comfortably furnished family bedrooms. Each has its own private bathroom and families have access to many facilities including a kitchen, dining room, lounge areas, playroom, arcade games room and outdoor courtyard with barbecue facilities. The family room has more than 600 visits from local families each month. It offers somewhere to sleep, an environment for a quiet break, a place where children and other family members can be entertained, and even the facilities to undertake a mundane task, such as laundry. These are small things in everyday life perhaps, but things that have an impact and provide a sense of normalcy in a challenging period when return to the family home on a regular basis is not possible.

Ronald McDonald House makes every effort to ensure that the cost of accommodation is kept as low as possible, endeavouring to accommodate families regardless of their financial situation. It is worth considering, as we prepare to return to our homes and our families tonight, that in Australia approximately 15 per cent of children under the age of 16 are affected by serious long-term health conditions, 3.5 per cent have a chronic illness and as many as 250 families will be sleeping at a Ronald McDonald House tonight, as will more than 6,000 families each year.

I congratulate Newcastle's Ronald McDonald House on its outstanding service over the past 20 years. In concluding, it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge that its success, as with other Ronald McDonald houses, is due in no small part to its donors, supporters and volunteers. The dedication of the tireless volunteers available in Ronald McDonald House, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, is commendable. I would like to quote Wendy, a recipient of that charity, who stated:

We have been staying at RMH [Ronald McDonald House] for the past 14 years, since our daughter was diagnosed with a brain tumour when she was 2 years old—it's our 'home away from home'. Whether we stay for a week or just overnight, there is always a warm, friendly welcome when we arrive after a 4 hour drive. There are lots of things to entertain the children while Mum & Dad can have some quiet time if needed. The House dinners on a Tuesday night are fantastic—gives parents a break from meal preparation. Although everyone knows in the back of their minds that the children are sick, some more seriously than others, it's a happy environment and the volunteers and staff certainly help make it that way. RMH in the Hunter is unreal! Thanks for having us and Happy 20th Birthday!

The compassionate support of volunteers for sick children and their families honours them as very special people. I endorse the statement that they are at the heart of Ronald McDonald House and I thank the member for Wallsend for raising the great work of this charity in the House.

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange) [11.20 a.m.]: It is with great pleasure that I support this motion and I commend the member for Wallsend for bringing it to the House. I know how important the Ronald McDonald House in Newcastle is to that area. Ronald McDonald House Charities has been providing a home away from home for seriously ill children and their families since 1981—that is 30 years in Australia. Since opening the first Ronald McDonald House, more than 65,000 families have been assisted and supported and one in eight Australians has been helped or knows someone who has been helped by one of the Ronald McDonald House charitable programs. As many as 250 families will be sleeping at a Ronald McDonald House tonight, and more than 6,000 families do so each year. Ronald McDonald House has particular significance for regional Australians because they often have to travel long distances in order to get their seriously ill children treated.

Ronald McDonald House provides a vital service in helping to relieve the financial and emotional stress associated with having to move away from family and friends in such stressful circumstances. Ronald McDonald House Charities are particularly relevant to the Orange electorate because on 16 June this year the first sod was turned on the new Ronald McDonald House at the very new Orange hospital. The Orange hospital site is the location of the fourteenth Ronald McDonald House and it is the first environmentally friendly Ronald McDonald House in Australia. It will be completed by the end of 2012. The Ronald McDonald House at Orange

will comprise 20 units with each unit being capable of housing a family of six. Families from right across central western New South Wales and even far western New South Wales will be able to stay there while their children are being treated at the Orange hospital.

I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Lewis family of Orange who operate the Orange McDonald's restaurant. Joanne Lewis is the Chair of Ronald McDonald House Charities in Orange and has worked with unceasing energy to make this invaluable service a reality. Joanne's husband, Jeff, is also a tireless advocate and supporter of this very worthy cause. I acknowledge Orange Ronald McDonald House fundraising committee chair Kylie Lewis-Minogue for all of her efforts over the years. She recently organised a charity ball, complete with *Titanic* theme, which raised \$55,000—in one night. That is extraordinary feat and our whole electorate is very grateful for all her hard work. The Lewis family of Orange personifies community spirit in our area.

It was not just the turning of the first sod of Ronald McDonald House at Orange that was welcome news for the people of western New South Wales. Ronald McDonald House Charities and Royal Far West recently launched Australia's first Ronald McDonald Care Mobile, which will be based in Orange. The Care Mobile is a 12-metre long vehicle with two clinical consulting rooms. The Royal Far West clinicians will provide a range of health services, including paediatrics, speech therapy, occupational therapy, psychology, psychiatry and social work. New technologies, such as video conferencing, will also be used. It was great to visit Royal Far West yesterday and talk to some of the clinicians behind that program. It was most impressive. The Ronald McDonald Care Mobile will provide primary care diagnosis, treatment, referral and follow-up for complex medical conditions, as well as health education.

I acknowledge the support of Bob Craig and West Orange Motors for their generous ongoing support of the Care Mobile. As I mentioned, it was marvellous to visit Royal Far West yesterday and see the many children from all over New South Wales using that facility, and in particular students from my own electorate in Mudgee. The media asked one lady, who lived about an hour out of Broken Hill, about what Royal Far West meant to her and it was obviously very emotional because she was in tears as she recounted how valuable that service is to her family.

As others have stated, it is not just Ronald McDonald House that Ronald McDonald House Charities support. There is a range of programs, including the Ronald McDonald Learning Program and the Ronald McDonald Charlie Bell Scholarship, which assists young people who have had serious illness to reach their dreams, including support in education and other areas, such as apprenticeship tools. I am sure that I join all members of this House in celebrating not only 20 years of Ronald McDonald House at the John Hunter Hospital but 30 years of Ronald McDonald House in Australia. I sincerely thank Ronald McDonald House Charities for their invaluable work and look forward to many more years of service to the people of this State.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [11.25 a.m.]: It is with pleasure and honour that I speak to the motion of the member for Wallsend that highlights the twentieth anniversary of Ronald McDonald House in Newcastle. My background of working for CanTeen—the Australian organisation for young people living with cancer—resulted in many hundreds of interactions with Ronald McDonald houses in both Newcastle and Sydney. I can vouch with considerable authority that Ronald McDonald houses offer families a home away from home during the critical health care of young people from country areas right across the State. The condition of accessing Ronald McDonald House is that the patient and family live more than 100 kilometres away from a medical centre. You can imagine that 100 kilometres would be about 1½ to two hours of travelling time. We certainly do not want emotionally stressed families travelling that far on the road.

I will speak primarily of the cancer experience for young people and their families. The treatment of cancer is generally a long and protracted process. It almost always includes many weeks, if not months, of treatment, hospitalisation and intensive health care. This treatment requires specialised equipment and practitioners. These experts can only be found, and can only treat, in major hospitals and urban centres. As such, treatment from home is not an option for rural and regional families. The very essence of this concept is something that many in this Chamber might not fully appreciate, given their residence in metropolitan Sydney. Generally speaking, I do not envy city dwellers, but when it comes to medical treatment and health care there comes a time when I think city slickers are far better off, better resourced and, as evidence shows, with a better chance of surviving serious illness such as cancer.

Let us imagine a scenario where a young person from, say, Muswellbrook in the upper Hunter is diagnosed with cancer. Muswellbrook is 120 kilometres from Newcastle. Immediately it is identified that the

primary treatment centre will be the John Hunter Children's Hospital in Newcastle and treatment will take six weeks in the first instance and then be reviewed. Let us imagine that the child belongs to a family with a mother and father, and two brothers or sisters. The first thing needed will be somewhere to stay in Newcastle, but where do you start? During this time, income sources might be limited, depending on the work and leave entitlements of the parent or parents. Keep in mind that a family room even in a one-star motel in Newcastle would cost approximately \$100 a night, \$700 a week and \$4,200 for the six-week period. Let us keep in mind that income sources might be limited.

While away from home, food becomes an issue. Does the motel room have a kitchenette? What about the food basics that we take for granted in our pantry at home—rice, pasta, sauce, pepper, salt, Vegemite, peanut butter and so on? When you relocate, those basics have to be purchased, and all this time income sources are limited. If one is not eating in the kitchenette in a motel room, what are the options for food? Undoubtedly, it is takeaway, which is never cheaper than a home-cooked meal. So now we are forking out for a sandwich, a drink, a hamburger or fish and chips that will keep the siblings happy and content while they watch their parents focus 100 per cent of their energy on the sick patient. On top of that, boredom kicks in and the siblings start looking for some entertainment, mum and dad are looking for something to read, and again they put their hand in their pocket. Members will be starting to get the picture. I refer to cancer as a hand-in-pocket disease. It just takes and takes and takes.

Even though our wonderful healthcare centres treat patients free of charge, everything else is an expense for the family. With the bills piling up, the family is forced to make a choice, which is between one of the parents and possibly the siblings heading back home to man, or woman, the house and deal with the mounting debts, and the other parent staying with the child. Which parent in this House would like to choose between the bedside of their child who is facing a life-threatening illness or the financial survival of the family? When one parent heads back to home, the family is split. The healthy siblings carry the burden of illness but they also want their own life. They are missing out on their soccer, their league, their dancing, their craft and their friends while their parents focus 100 per cent of their energy on the sick child.

In those circumstances, Ronald McDonald House steps in and offers accommodation to families at minimal cost. When I was working in the industry, it was \$30 a night. Each room has a kitchenette and of course all the other necessary facilities. Ronald McDonald House provides a base so that the family is just across the road from the hospital. It is also a place where a family can reunite during the weekends. I am incredibly fortunate that my children are healthy and well and that I have not yet required sustained medical treatment for a serious illness, but I have worked with hundreds of families who have experienced one or both. Caring for a sick person is an enormous emotional drain on parents. Days are long, emotions are raw, and options are few. I congratulate Ronald McDonald House on all that it does to minimise the impacts on families that have a child with a life-threatening illness. I congratulate the hundreds of volunteers who work in the centres and the hundreds of thousands of people who contribute to the centres.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [11.30 a.m.]: I congratulate Ronald McDonald House on its twentieth anniversary in Newcastle and its thirtieth anniversary in Australia. Ronald McDonald House not only supplies housing in and around hospitals in regional centres for children and their families but also supplies respite care and holiday care for children and their families. There is a centre in Myall Lakes that opened a couple of years ago—in Forster on the mid North Coast, where the sky is always blue, where the aqua-blue waters are always crystal clear and without pollution, and where it is always sunny, even when it is raining everywhere else.

Forster and Tuncurry are twin cities that are linked by a bridge. On the ocean side of the bridge in Forster, there is a magnificent park with jetties, boats and picnic areas. It is absolutely beautiful. Towards the ocean, there is a Marine Rescue NSW building and the break wall. That is where Ronald McDonald House has built a holiday park for families and children. It was entirely built, supplied and financed by the people of the Great Lakes area under the guidance and drive of the sometimes pushy, unreasonable and aggressive financial controller, Ross Pressgrove—without whom it would not have been accomplished.

Families visit the park from all areas of New South Wales for holidays and respite care. A number of self-contained family-size cabins are available that overlook the magnificent waterway within a very safe environment. I feel unable to express adequately the gratitude of my electorate to Ross Pressgrove and Ronald McDonald House for realising the potential of the site and the potential assistance that could be provided to families by establishing that facility in Forster. Ronald McDonald House also assists many of our residents when they need to attend the John Hunter Hospital.

During my inaugural speech I referred to the lack of oncology services and a full-time oncologist in the Manning-Great Lakes area. The closest regional health centre that provides oncology services is the John Hunter Hospital, so Myall Lakes families who have to travel approximately 200 kilometres to seek treatment are able to use Ronald McDonald House, which is adjacent to the hospital. I commend the motion as an opportunity to recognise the John Hunter Hospital and Ronald McDonald House as well as Ronald McDonald House Charities Australia.

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) [11.35 a.m.], in reply: I thank the members for Tamworth, Lake Macquarie, Orange, Cessnock and Myall Lakes for their contributions to this important debate. I reiterate that these debates are important because they give us an opportunity to highlight the good deeds of wonderful people in our electorates. Too often members of Parliament talk about things that worry us and matters of concern, so it is really nice to be able to simply say "Thank you" to all our wonderful volunteers throughout New South Wales and Australia. The member for Tamworth made some really interesting points. He spoke about 65,000 families in Australia that are involved with Ronald McDonald House and the fact that it supports people at a difficult time. As a parliamentary representative of a regional electorate, he would know about the difficulties caused by tyranny of distance in a normal life, but more so for a family that is experiencing serious illness.

The member for Tamworth made the good point that Ronald McDonald houses, particularly the Ronald McDonald House in Tamworth that is the focus of the debate, allowed daily activities to continue as a method of reducing the stress that is experienced by families. One of the important matters he mentioned was simply washing. A family who is away from home still needs to have their clothes washed. That might be the last thing on the minds of parents of a sick child, but it must be done and parents in those circumstances need easy access to clothes washing facilities. Ronald McDonald houses provide that, which is really fantastic. He also referred to the fundraising activities and that fundraising records were broken when collections were carried out for Ronald McDonald House at Tamworth.

The member for Lake Macquarie referred to the importance of family rooms and programs and the fact that Ronald McDonald House was one of the first to open its doors in the Newcastle area. He pointed out that caring volunteers should be recognised and that Ronald McDonald House in Newcastle receives more than 600 family visits a month. He also mentioned costs. If a child is sick, parents need to factor in that they will be away from home and that their lifestyle will be impacted upon by additional imposts. Ronald McDonald House makes sure that access to appropriate accommodation is affordable. I totally agree with the member for Lake Macquarie that the success of Ronald McDonald House is due to its donors and tireless volunteers.

The member for Orange referred to 30 years of Ronald McDonald House in Australia and that one in eight families either has been directly helped by Ronald McDonald House or knows someone who has been, and that is really important. He mentioned the new Ronald McDonald House that will be opening at the Orange Base Hospital. It is interesting to note that it will be the first environmentally friendly Ronald McDonald House in New South Wales. We will look forward to seeing what it will be like and how it operates in an environmentally friendly way. That is the approach we all should take to new buildings. My comrade and colleague the member for Cessnock referred to his background with CanTeen. He had long and varied experience with that charitable organisation and the manner in which it helps kids living with cancer.

He made the important point that cancer treatment is a long and protracted process requiring specialist doctors. This means that people need to get to the city or major regional areas to access those facilities. That is why the John Hunter Hospital at Newcastle is important. Someone living at Muswellbrook needs to travel all the way to the John Hunter Hospital facility to access that service. Finally, I have a little quote from Suzy, who has been helped by Ronald McDonald House. She said:

The House and the people in it made me feel safe, secure and supported at a time when I felt like my life was falling apart.

Thanks a bunch :) Suzy.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Business Lapsed

General Business Notice of Motion (General Notices) No. 19 called on and, pursuant to Standing Order 99, lapsed.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Postponement of Business

General Business Notice of Motion (General Notices) No. 20 postponed on motion by Ms Sonia Hornery.

STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

Mr RICHARD TORBAY (Northern Tablelands) [11.42 a.m.], by leave: I move:

That this House:

- (1) supports the New South Wales State Emergency Service Volunteers Association submission to the New South Wales Government; and
- (2) supports the State Emergency Service retention of its volunteer status.

I am sure that all members in this place recognise the support and sterling work of the volunteers of the State Emergency Service. There are more than 10,000 volunteers in 228 locations across the State, managed and supported by around 200 paid staff members. The State Emergency Service has evolved over some 55 years to become an extremely versatile emergency response agency. This evolution has been built on volunteerism with a minimum paid employee support base. It began through support for each other and their communities and has been a fantastic evolution. The New South Wales State Emergency Service Volunteers Association represents, and is governed by, the volunteer members of the New South Wales State Emergency Service.

Obviously, I met with them prior to the election but also did so from time to time throughout my term as the local member. I bring to the attention of the House the submission of the New South Wales State Emergency Service Volunteers Association to the New South Wales Government entitled, "Constructing a Road Map for the Betterment of the New South Wales State Emergency Service." The volunteer association is independent of the New South Wales State Emergency Service but, of course, works closely with management and staff on behalf of the volunteers for the betterment of the service.

I have seen firsthand that positive and constructive relationship. In the submission the State Emergency Service Volunteers Association notes that due to difficulties faced by volunteers and the increase in paid staff its members are concerned that the State Emergency Service may move away from its volunteer roots. State Emergency Service volunteers have always responded to local emergencies, and management has supported that response. The concern expressed in the submission, and which the volunteers wanted me to raise today, is that local volunteer response is becoming a headquarters management response.

The knowledge and experience of local volunteers is a key strength of the State Emergency Service and the volunteer association strongly supports retaining volunteers and valuing their input. The association makes several well thought-out recommendations that would help bolster volunteers generally across New South Wales and improve their conditions in the State Emergency Service while retaining their volunteer status. It is common for volunteers to be out of pocket due to various costs involved in their activities, and this is viewed as a barrier for some people. The volunteer association pointed out that if New South Wales improved emergency service leave conditions and introduced legislation similar to that in Queensland and Western Australia, which provides for payments to employees on emergency leave, it would lighten their burden.

The volunteer association recommends that employees who are emergency service volunteers should be exempt from payroll tax. This would assist employers and cover the costs of paying volunteers on emergency leave. Providing that additional assistance to employers will, in an overwhelming number of cases, encourage their goodwill by allowing their employees to serve the community. The volunteer association notes that the State Emergency Service has changed and that the requirement for paid staff has increased. The association recognises that management needs to adapt to changes in community expectation and efficiency, but is concerned that volunteers are being made to feel less significant due to the increased numbers of paid staff.

These concerns could be easily allayed if certain changes were made to the current recruitment process. While maintaining the merit selection principle of choosing the best person for the job, more weight should be given to experience gained during volunteer work for the State Emergency Service. This legitimate experience ought to be able to be argued with absolute authority in recruitment circumstances. Where two candidates for a position are equally strong, possible preference should be given to the candidate with State Emergency Service volunteer experience.

Similarly, a volunteer could be appointed to the State Emergency Service management group to give a greater voice to volunteers and the volunteer culture. Let us be clear that I am putting to the House that the culture of a volunteer organisation should remain, which is the constructive approach the association takes. It recognises the need for paid staff, but it is a volunteer organisation that emerged from the grassroots of the community and provides an extraordinary level and range of services to the community in the most difficult circumstances.

We all know that when people pick up the phone and call emergency services organisations, the response is always extraordinary. It is humbling and it makes local members proud that we have such dedicated volunteers and people in our emergency services organisations. As I said, the State Emergency Service has a strong history of helping the residents of New South Wales through numerous difficult times. This history is closely tied to its volunteer members, and the work they have performed has been outstanding. Clearly, volunteers will be required to perform that work into the future.

I strongly support the State Emergency Service retaining its volunteer status. It underlines exactly why the organisation has continued to go from strength to strength in the many areas where we utilise volunteers. If we did not have volunteers the State and the country would not run. If governments had to collect a tax to pay the volunteers who contribute many things that improve the quality of life in our community, taxation would be more than double and governments would achieve about half of what is currently done by volunteers to improve circumstances for people, parochially, particularly in regional, rural and remote parts of New South Wales. If there were no volunteers, no services would be provided in those areas. I commend this constructive motion to the House in support of the State Emergency Service retaining its volunteer status.

Mr DARREN WEBBER (Wyang) [11.51 a.m.]: I acknowledge the motion. However, I move:

That the motion be amended by leaving out all words after the word "That" with a view to inserting instead:

"this House:

- (1) acknowledges the State Emergency Service submission to the New South Wales Government and supports the outstanding dedication of the NSW State Emergency Service volunteers who assist our community through their emergency and rescue service work;
- (2) congratulates the State Emergency Service volunteers who have been assisting with rescue and clean-up efforts following the June Mid North Coast and Hunter floods; and
- (3) supports the State Emergency Service retention of its volunteer status."

The State Emergency Service, as it was known, was formed in April 1955. I remember my father telling the story—the Webber family lived in Newcastle at the time—of the floods in the area. When I was a young boy he drove me through Morpeth. I came from the Central Coast and there is not much at Morpeth. However, one thing stuck in my young mind: the marks of the floodwaters in the 1950s could still be seen at the top of the telegraph poles. My father also told me a story about the local surf lifesaving club. Obviously surf lifesaving is a big part of our culture and my family. During one event the water was so high that members of the local surf club rode their surf boat through the front doors of the community hall. Local surf clubs in Newcastle, the Hunter and Central Coast had sent their active patrolling members to help out. As a result of those efforts the government of the day formed the equivalent of the State Emergency Service at the time.

Helping a mate is part of Australian culture. It does not have to be a neighbour; volunteers travel throughout the State and country to help each other in times of need. That is common in a country that has weather extremes. As I said, the State Emergency Service was formed in April 1955, following floods which caused a substantial loss of life and massive damage to property. At that time the need for a body of trained and disciplined volunteers was realised. I will tell another story—I am quite good at telling stories. When we were kids in the early 1990s there were fires on the Central Coast and some of our neighbours lost their homes. It is one thing for neighbours to rally together to help put out a fire. If they are not trained and do not have the proper equipment for the task they put not only themselves but also others in danger.

So the need for people to be trained, properly equipped and tested regularly for proficiency is important. That need was the start of the State Emergency Service story. I will give a little history. There was a tense world situation at the time—I am talking about 1955—and the Government decided there was a need for a civil defence organisation in the event of a nuclear attack. In September 1955 the two organisations merged under the leadership of Major General Ivan Dougherty—later Sir Ivan Dougherty. The new organisation was known as Civil Defence. In 1972 the State Emergency Service and Civil Defence Act was passed by Parliament.

The Act remained in force until 1989, when it was replaced by the State Emergency Service Act. Currently, the State Emergency Service is a versatile and widely used rescue and public safety organisation, with more than 10,000 volunteers spread throughout New South Wales.

At this point it would be remiss of me not to give similar praise to surf lifesaving clubs, which perform a similar role in our community. I am proud of my local surf lifesaving club. Surf lifesaving trumps the State Emergency Service as it has 17,000 active members. Nonetheless, the State Emergency Service has been a big help to my family and the Wyong community over the years. In times of need it is important to know that the State Emergency Service number to call is 132 500 in the event of an emergency. It is a regular event for trees to collapse on homes, as is flooding—the range of services is versatile. If anyone is interested in joining the State Emergency Service, or indeed wants to make a contribution to this important organisation, the number to ring is 1800 201 000.

As I said, more than 10,000 men and women serve as volunteer members of the State Emergency Service, assisting their communities in times of floods, storms and other emergencies. Over the past two weeks alone State Emergency Service volunteers have gone to extraordinary lengths to support the flood-affected communities on the mid North Coast and in the Hunter. The Central Coast had some minor flooding, and the State Emergency Service was involved. I sought leave from the Parliament—it was my first day off from Parliament—to return to my electorate to inspect the damage. While the Central Coast was on the tail end of the mid North Coast events, the flooding was still severe and State Emergency Service volunteers were out there in force to ensure that the Wyong community was safe.

Since 12 June 2011 State Emergency Service members have responded to more than 1,700 requests for assistance, as well as providing important ongoing support to communities trying to recover from the immense damage caused by the disasters. The Government applauds the efforts of these brave men and women, and is committed to providing them with the support they need. The Government also recognises that volunteers are the heart of the State Emergency Service. State Emergency Service volunteers have an ethos of community spirit, bravery and initiative. This enables them to face incredible dangers that would challenge the rest of us. The O'Farrell Government has committed to reviewing the funding model for fire and emergency services in New South Wales. All key stakeholders, including the State Emergency Service Volunteers Association, will be consulted as part of the review process.

Wyong State Emergency Service has a proud history. Earlier this month—I am proud to mention this in the Parliament—two local State Emergency Service members were honoured at a special ceremony. Ian Rimmer and Matthew Field, who boast more than 30 years service and dedication to the State Emergency Service between them, were commended for their loyalty and service, and were presented with a national medal by the New South Wales Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for the Hunter, and Vice-President of the Executive Council—he is close to the Wyong electorate—and New South Wales State Emergency Service Deputy Commissioner Steven Pearce at a ceremony earlier this month at the great Wyong RSL.

The national medal is an award given in recognition of long service in organisations to protect life and property and at some risk to members. Mr Rimmer joined the State Emergency Service when he was 18 years old, and officially joined the Wyong unit in 1995. Mr Field joined the Wyong State Emergency Service in 1995 and, like Mr Rimmer, has held several important roles in the unit, including deputy controller and acting local controller as an accredited trainer. I sincerely congratulate both gentlemen. Earlier this year six volunteers from the Wyong State Emergency Service travelled to north Queensland and helped out with the devastation and disaster after Cyclone Yasi. Not only does Wyong State Emergency Service help locally; the State Emergency Service organisation pools its resources in times of need.

One severe time of need was the flooding on the Central Coast in June 2007, which caused unprecedented damage. Basically, I had not seen such a volume of water since 1992. It was a severe storm known as an east coast low that also struck the Hunter region. A storm of that force had not been seen for many years and to make matters worse there were other natural conditions such as storm surge and strong currents and waves that pushed in from the ocean, and king tides. It was a concern that the floods last week combined with a king tide would create more flooding in the Tuggerah Lakes area but fortunately we did not have that problem.

I remember the June 2007 floods very well. I was working as an electrician and travelling around the local area disconnecting power from homes because there was a danger that as the flood levels rose and reached hot water system terminals the hot water systems would explode. There were also homes with holes in the roof where water was coming in and reaching power points and switches and we had to disconnect the power to make the home safe. In times of need there is always a coordinated effort between the State Emergency Service, the fire brigade, police services and tradespeople in the specific area of electrical problems. There was not one

suburb on the Central Coast that was not affected in the June 2007 floods. In 18 days just under 3,000 requests for assistance were made by the local community. The Wyong SES headquarters building itself was damaged and they had to relocate to the Gosford headquarters, which was also inundated with requests for services and help.

The June 2007 floods will go down as probably one of the worst disasters on the Central Coast to date and had it not been for the dedicated service of the Wyong State Emergency Service many people would have been in far greater need. The massive blackouts in some suburbs made the floods worse. Some people were without power for three or four days. While the State Emergency Service performed the critical function of making places safe in the immediate aftermath of the disaster, they were also there to back up and help people with food and clothing in their time of need. The State Emergency Service is very versatile. Surf life saving has a slightly more blinkers-on approach to a very dedicated service on the beach but the State Emergency Service is extremely versatile. I commend our amendment to the motion and I thank the member for Northern Tablelands for moving the motion. I again congratulate the two members of the Wyong State Emergency Service for being awarded with national service medals earlier this month.

[Business interrupted.]

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICE

Establishment and Membership

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [12.02 p.m.], by leave: I apologise for interrupting debate but there is business of the House that needs to be addressed. I have raised this issue with the Opposition Whip. I move:

- (1) A Joint Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and report on the Parliamentary Budget Office, established under the Parliamentary Budget Officer Act 2010.
- (2) In conducting its inquiry, the committee consider:
 - (a) the purpose of the office, and whether the terms of the Act are appropriate; and
 - (b) the role for the office, including and not limited to its:
 - (i) functions and powers;
 - (ii) structure, staffing and resourcing; and
 - (iii) accountability and oversight mechanisms.
- (3) The committee may consider the establishment and operation of comparable offices in other jurisdictions.
- (4) The committee consist of 11 members comprising:
 - (a) six members of the Legislative Assembly; and
 - (b) five members of the Legislative Council.
- (5) The following members of the Legislative Assembly be appointed to serve on the committee: Mr Clayton Barr, Mr David Elliot, Mr Chris Holstein, Ms Kristina Keneally, Mr Geoff Provest and Mr Darren Webber.
- (6) Notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders of either House, at any meeting of the committee, any six members of the committee shall constitute a quorum, provided that the committee meets as a joint committee at all times.
- (7) The committee have leave to sit and transact business during the sittings or any adjournment of either House, and despite any prorogation of the Houses of Parliament.
- (8) The committee have leave to make visits of inspection within the State of New South Wales and other States and Territories of Australia.
- (9) A message be sent acquainting the Legislative Council of the resolution and requesting the Legislative Council to appoint five of its members to serve with the members of the Legislative Assembly upon the committee, and to fix a time and place for the first meeting.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

Message sent to the Legislative Council advising it of the resolution.

STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

[Business resumed.]

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [12.05 p.m.]: I support the motion moved by the member for Northern Tablelands in relation to the State Emergency Service volunteers, and particularly the State Emergency Service Volunteers Association's submission to the New South Wales Government and the retention of the service's volunteer status. State Emergency Service volunteers come from all walks of life and each contributes to the State Emergency Service and their local community in their own way.

There are many roles that a volunteer can participate in regardless of age, gender or ability. People need to be 16 years of age to join the State Emergency Service—although there may be a cadet program that offers training in a particular area or through a school—and must be keen to train in rescue, operation, training and/or community education and media. Most of the activity happens when areas are affected by floods, storms and other emergencies, but there are other roles that a State Emergency Service volunteer can carry out when not operational.

There is a commitment to training and updating skills as well as practising those already gained, but the friendships that are forged with fellow volunteers can make this easy. Trainees also receive nationally accredited competencies as the State Emergency Service is a registered training organisation. There are particular roles played by volunteers, including functions such as air search, community education, community first responder, land search, media, road crash rescue, storm preparation and response, urban search and rescue and vertical rescue. Volunteering with the State Emergency Service is a rewarding experience for not only the volunteers but also the local community.

The paid positions in the State Emergency Service are also important. In August 2010 the former Government and I as Parliamentary Secretary announced the recruitment of 20 new positions at the State Emergency Service headquarters in Wollongong. Those 20 new positions in the Illawarra were to assist with the delivery of operational support and implementation of lessons learnt following natural disasters and better resource allocation to assist volunteers in the field, therefore helping the community. The recruitment was to enable the State Emergency Service to maintain an improved level of operational readiness through greater situational awareness, better planning and improved information flow to the community and decision-making staff and volunteers.

The State Emergency Service needed to restructure to ensure that the assistance that the volunteers needed could be properly managed, provided and quality assured. A \$5 million enhancement in the State budget enabled those 20 jobs to be created, converting that money into action on the ground. The various grants provided to the State Emergency Service to specifically enhance training of the volunteers show that while there is obviously a need for operational staff who are the paid workforce to manage and direct the volunteers, without the volunteer status it might be somewhat more difficult to attract those volunteers. I acknowledge the need for the paid workforce but the services and training provided are an essential historical part of the State Emergency Service that needs to be maintained.

As I said, the service's headquarters is based in Wollongong, so I have a strong understanding of and close relationship with the State Emergency Service and indeed the volunteers. Wollongong also has one of the largest training facilities for State Emergency Service volunteers. I place on record how proud we are of the work of the State Emergency Service volunteers. We are also proud of the professionalism that the State Emergency Service provide around the region for a whole host of emergency demands which are often in very dangerous circumstances. I am very proud also to support the motion moved by the member for Northern Tablelands.

Mr BART BASSETT (Londonderry) [12.10 p.m.]: I support the amendment. Although I am not a member of the volunteer organisation I have certainly supported the State Emergency Service as mayor of the Hawkesbury. I have seen firsthand the great work of the State Emergency Service in our local area and especially across the rest of the State. We have seen over many years that in times of disasters, such as hail damage in the city or other crisis, volunteers from the State Emergency Service from all over the State will travel to the disaster and assist people in need. Sometimes they remain in those locations for weeks on end. We can never forget that a lot of them are not retired but are businesspeople or employees so we also need to acknowledge the employers who release the volunteers from their place of work to partake in work that supports our community.

Recently we have seen again the great dedication of the State Emergency Service and other volunteers on the mid North Coast and in the Hunter floods. They either helped people in need who were in flooded areas or assisted to cover roofs; they were there day and night assisting their communities, having travelled outside of their area. The Hawkesbury State Emergency Service, located at Wilberforce, supports a great deal of the Londonderry electorate. It is on the border of the Hawkesbury and the Londonderry State electorates. The Hawkesbury has a lot of history with flooding and its State Emergency Service members are very well trained to deal with it. It has a large facility that houses a great deal of flood boats and its members train every week and go away on training camps on many weekends. They put an enormous amount of dedication into their training so that they are prepared when they have to travel interstate or intrastate to give world-class assistance to people in need.

The families and friends of the State Emergency Service volunteers give a great deal of support as volunteers spend a lot of time training and conducting rescue work which is all very dangerous. Whether they are training or rescuing someone from a car accident or a cliff, injuries occur. In the past few weeks I saw a volunteer sustain a serious injury but as soon as he was better he volunteered his time again and laughed off the incident. Safety is paramount to the training. Accidents are rare but when they occur reviews are always carried out to find out how it can be done better in the future, to improve safety at all times. The equipment is first rate and the fundraising which purchases and replaces equipment is first rate. The amount of equipment at the State Emergency Service facility at Wilberforce is fantastic. When an event happens they can get people from all over the city and run a control centre from there in a very short time. That takes place right across our State: it is all about preparation, first-class facilities and great dedication to the cause.

They are certainly not the only volunteers in our community; the Rural Fire Service and other rescue organisations have a culture of volunteering. People like to join them because of the mateship involved among those rescuing people, controllers operating radios, and even those doing the catering to ensure that State Emergency Service volunteers get sustenance while they are operating 24 hours a day. All sorts of different people volunteer their time to assist in emergency services. We need to constantly remind our communities of the fantastic work of our volunteers, whether it is in the Rural Fire Service, Fire and Rescue or the State Emergency Service. I commend the amendment to the House.

Debate adjourned on motion by Ms Anna Watson and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ILLAWARRA SPORTS HIGH SCHOOL AND CAITLIN FOORD

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [12.15 p.m.]: I want to pay tribute to a young lady with outstanding sporting talent. This talent, I am pleased to say, has been recognised with a most prestigious honour. Caitlin Foord is a 16-year-old Illawarra Sports High School year 11 student who has just been selected in the Matildas squad for the 2011 Women's World Cup in Germany. Caitlin is the youngest member of the 21 player squad which includes 13 debutantes, and I understand the team has an average age of just 22, making it the most youthful squad ever chosen by Australian selectors. Caitlin impressed the Matildas coach, Tom Sermanni, when he saw her play in a game for Sydney Football Club and invited her to attend a national squad camp, where he was clearly impressed.

In Caitlin's relatively short but illustrious career she has gone through the processes of representing her school, Illawarra Sports High School, her zone Wollongong, her region South Coast and her State. She played club football with the Warilla Wanderers and the Illawarra Stingrays. In 2009 at the National School Sport Australia Championships in Perth Caitlin was a member of the New South Wales schoolgirls team that won the championship. That is a major achievement for any player, naturally, but even more so for a 14-year-old playing against girls up to five years older than her. Such is her undeniable talent that in 2009 Caitlin also became a member of the New South Wales Institute of Sport women's football program. This involved travelling from her home in the Illawarra to Glenwood in Sydney four times a week.

I take this opportunity to recognise Caitlin's family, particularly her mother Simone. Without the support, time and, no doubt, money, I dare say Caitlin's dream of representing her country would have been just that little bit harder to achieve. Congratulations Simone on your tireless hours as taxi, cook, coach, and of course supportive mother. Caitlin is quoted as saying, "Without my mum I would not be where I am today." On behalf

of mothers I say that I think that is a wonderful recognition. It would also be remiss of me not to congratulate the teachers and staff at the Illawarra Sports High School, whose dedication to their students is absolutely second to none. I point out that three of my four children attended that school prior to my becoming a member of Parliament, so I have a lot of pride in the school's achievements.

The school itself is first class with state-of-the-art facilities in both the academic and the sporting realm. I am pleased to say that as the local member I successfully lobbied the then State Labor Government for more than \$2 million for a world class gymnasium, which was delivered and is one of the many jewels in the school's crown. Acknowledgement must also go to the Illawarra Stingray's Rob McKie, who organised last-minute celebrations for Caitlin prior to her departure. His ongoing dedication to the club and the players is to be commended. In closing, I wish the best of luck to Caitlin and all her fellow players in the Matildas in their match against Brazil. I know they will do their family, friends, fans and country proud. Caitlin is an example for young families to take up what I would normally call football but should be referred to as soccer for the sake of this debate.

Illawarra Stingrays have achieved great success, but also offer comradeship, support and training to young females. Caitlin's achievements and the support that she received from the staff and trainers at both the club and the Illawarra Sports High School should encourage many young females to get involved in women's soccer. It provides opportunities to excel. We know that women's soccer is starting to get the recognition it deserves. That has been a long time coming, but we are now seeing the professional in the sport and consequentially good attendances at games. People are paying attention to the records being set and awards being won. That shows that women's soccer is on the move. People such as young Caitlin help young females to get ahead in that field.

SWANSEA ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr GARRY EDWARDS (Swansea) [12.20 p.m.]: My electorate of Swansea is a classic example of the lack of a coordinated approach to infrastructure by the former Labor Government. Notwithstanding that during the 16 years of unbroken Labor administrations New South Wales achieved record receipts, inter alia, by way of stamp duty on real property transfers, the result of the unprecedented real property boom across the whole of New South Wales from 1997 to 2003, the only infrastructure upgrade in my electorate of Swansea was to Belmont District Hospital. The upgrade delivered a net outcome of the closure of 14 hospital beds—a great result: build a new attached hospital building at a cost of several million dollars and deliver a net result to the community of a loss of 14 desperately needed hospital beds.

Some 70 years ago our planners had the foresight and vision to provide for a road bypass corridor, running from the Pacific Highway at Marks Point, now in the city of Lake Macquarie, to the Pacific Highway at Adamstown Heights, in the city of Newcastle. Seventy-odd years ago planners had the foresight to appreciate that communities such as Belmont, Jewells, Floraville, Tingira Heights, Valentine, Eleebana, Warners Bay, Windale, Gateshead, Redhead, Charlestown, Kahibah and Dudley would by the late twentieth century be experiencing such traffic gridlock along stretches of the Pacific Highway that the Belmont-Charlestown bypass would be required as an essential piece of infrastructure in east Lake Macquarie.

Sadly, those farsighted planners of some 70 years ago did not see that in 2009 New South Wales planners of far less vision would relinquish the Belmont-Charlestown bypass, thus abandoning each and every one of those communities cited above, both present and future, to a less than substandard major highway and unacceptable traffic conditions. This is a traffic corridor that we as a Government must now address and attempt to reinstate.

There is not a single railway station in my electorate of Swansea. However, many of my constituents travel daily to and from railway stations, stations such as Wyee and Wyong. Those constituents for the past 16 years have had to rely mostly upon private transport due to an almost total lack of public transport, and when they arrive at these railway stations they have to contend with inadequate parking facilities and monotonously interrupted train timetables. In this regard I talk mainly of members of communities such as Chain Valley Bay, Catherine Hill Bay, Cams Wharf, Nards Wharf, Gwandalan, Summerland Point and Mannering Park within the electorate.

Those are the communities that have been especially ignored for 16 years. For 16 years the former Labor Government denuded regional utilities such as Hunter Water of funds, funds that were desperately needed

for infrastructure upgrades by regional utilities such as Hunter Water. Because the former Labor Government was unable to upgrade their assets and infrastructure such utilities were not left with sufficient funding even to carry out regular routine maintenance on infrastructure and assets.

Many people are familiar with the beautiful seaside village of Swansea, the gateway to the Hunter to the north and the Central Coast to the south, from which my electorate takes its name. Swansea Channel is the only entry artery and exit point for water to and from the Pacific Ocean into and from Lake Macquarie, Lake Macquarie being the largest salt water lake in the Southern Hemisphere. Swansea Channel is a highly dynamic marine environment, the consequence of which is that the channel requires regular dredging so that it remains navigable; and this navigability is absolutely essential to the fleets of ocean going commercial, sport and leisure craft entering and leaving this, the largest salt water lake in the Southern Hemisphere.

This navigability is essential for the sustainability of the several marinas, yachting and sailing clubs and the myriad small businesses established within and around the Lake. The people of Lake Macquarie and Swansea well understand the importance of the channel being navigable at all times, and it is not surprising therefore that within the Swansea and Lake Macquarie communities there was great euphoria and excitement when, on 14 March 2011, just 11 days out from the March 2011 State election, the former Labor Government did, with much fanfare, announce that it had placed an order for a dredge for full-time use in Swansea Channel. Mr Acting-Speaker, I am here to tell you that upon coming to government I, along with every other person in my electorate, was shattered when it was discovered that, no, the dredge for Swansea had never been ordered, and not only had the dredge not been ordered but the funds for the purchase of a dredge, any dredge, had never been approved.

Not only had the dredge not been ordered, nor the funds approved, but the source of the funding for the purchase of a dredge had at no time been unequivocally identified. This is not infrastructure by planning but, rather, a deliberate attempt to retain power—to retain power in this instance at a local level at any cost, even by way of a deliberately orchestrated program of deceit and lies. At the very best the communities of Swansea and Lake Macquarie were for 16 years the victims of a campaign of deliberate misrepresentation, perpetrated by the former corrupt Labor Government.

CESSNOCK ELECTORATE EMPLOYMENT

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [12.25 p.m.]: I wish to speak today of a strange phenomenon in my electorate—and, to be perfectly honest, I do not know whether it is a good or a bad thing. I speak of the booming resource sector and the impact that it has on employment. Let us start with the good. Now, more than any other time in my life, people are finding employment in coalmines. Not a week goes by when I do not see more job advertisements and hear more stories about more people that I know starting work in the mines—a terrific opportunity for all of those workers to earn really good money and improve their financial status.

The opportunity for wealth creation is a typical Australian dream and privilege. Many in this House will have heard or read about the wages of mine workers. Mines are often portrayed by media agencies as the gravy train to wealth. Well, I can say with authority that it is not quite as luxurious as it is often portrayed, but mineworkers do earn a good and attractive wage, generally in the vicinity of \$100,000 to \$120,000 a year. I highlight the wages and the opportunity because it is crucial to my statement today that we understand this. And I will happily add and openly declare that I have dozens of friends who work in mines right across the Hunter Valley, as well as in Queensland and Western Australia. I also declare to this House that many of them are currently negotiating wages increases of between 5 per cent and 7 per cent for the coming three to four years. Good on them. This is a terrific time for the industry, and if the workers can share in the wealth created all power to them.

Now, let us go to the bad side of this. The mines are dragging workers from every imaginable sector into the industry. During my campaign I heard a story of a winery that had been unable to retain tractor drivers, because with the income of a tractor driver at \$40,000 to \$50,000 it just could not compete: the same worker could go to work at a mine and earn more than \$100,000. Consequently, the owner of the winery has to drive his tractor. Instead of being in the cellar and crafting and creating the wine he is out in the fields on his tractor. Let me tell the House about my friends who were once police officers, nurses, teachers and prison officers. They too have left their occupations to go into the mines. These clever, intelligent, talented and highly skilled people are now driving roof bolts, spraying concrete and driving trucks—quite a waste of their skills. But, all power to them: they can earn a lot more money in a mine.

Two weeks ago I spoke to a plumber who had lost two tradesmen plumbers and a person who was in the third year of his apprenticeship. The plumber, who was at my house doing some work, explained to me that it is almost impossible for him to retain plumbers, needed to provide a basic service, because they leave and go to work in the mines. So my electorate has something of an employment crisis for those who are interested in finding work and doing well for themselves. The mines are the source of the problem. So where to from here? I say to the current Government that the release and approval of future mines, or the expansion of mining leases, must be done with considerable thought given to the balance. We must reach a balance of what is sustainable, not just from an environmental perspective but also from a community and workforce sector perspective, because what we currently have is bordering on unsustainable.

The second is that I fear that, possibly more in my electorate than in any other, the workforce will suffer at the hands of the 2.5 per cent cap placed on public sector wages by the current Government. I have spoken about the fact that even in good times I know police officers, nurses, teachers and prison officers who have gone into the mining industry. I can only imagine that, with mines currently negotiating 3, 4, 5, 6 or 7 per cent increases, the gap will widen. It will be more attractive and the incentive for people to leave the public sector and go to work in the mines will increase. It greatly concerns me to hear the simple stories of a plumber and a winemaker—and, let's face it, we are known for our wines. It is of real concern. I hope that the Government will keep this in mind as we go forward. It is important that I raise this matter in the House today and do the right thing by my constituents. It is of genuine concern—it is not imaginary. It is out there and it is real, and I say to the House today that I fear—and I hope that my fear is unfounded—that my electorate is going to suffer from the 2.5 per cent wage cap.

MICHELAGO VILLAGE

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro) [12.30 p.m.]: I bring the topic of community spirit in rural areas to the attention of the House today. In my inaugural speech I highlighted that the Monaro, beyond its rugged beauty, is about the fighting and pioneering spirit of the people and its strong sense of community and mateship. One such community within my electorate is the village of Michelago—a small town, with a population of approximately 800 people, situated on the Monaro Highway heading towards Cooma. Michelago is in a valley situated between the Tinderry Range in the east and Clear Range in the west.

Community spirit can be best described as a combination of volunteer work, donations and gestures of goodwill by residents and local businesses alike. The village of Michelago has demonstrated to the core what community spirit is and just how powerful it can be in changing people's lives. Shortly after being elected as the member for Monaro, a situation within the Michelago community was brought to my attention. A very brave six-year-old girl by the name of Sophie Tillack is battling stage 4 Wilms' tumour, which is a cancer of the kidneys that typically occurs in children. Sophie has been receiving intensive treatment, which has seen her in Sydney, away from loved ones, for a very long time. She has been fighting this battle very bravely over the past 11 months and I wish Sophie all the best in her fight against this terrible disease.

In support of Sophie and her family, and showing community spirit, the residents and businesses of Michelago banded together to raise funds. These funds will ensure that Sophie has everything she needs to bravely battle her cancer. Mothers Day saw the Michelago Hall reduced to standing room only when high tea was held. Supported by locals and people from surrounding districts, it was a great success. Generous donations of food and time were given freely and warmly, and \$2,000 was raised in just one afternoon. It was a truly tremendous effort and I thank Karen Hardgrave, Maureen Morgan and Cindy Brassil for their hard work and organisation of this event.

A week later the community came together again to hold a benefit dinner for Sophie and her family. On a brisk autumn night on 14 May my family and I were honoured to be invited to attend the event, "Shine for Sophie". Fantastic food, great company and a community not afraid to come together to help out one of their own made it a night to be remembered. It is in instances like this that you see the true Aussie spirit come alive. The event raised a little more than \$11,000—a community of 800 people, let me add—and I publicly thank the following people for the time and hard work that they invested in making this such a success: Cindy Brassil, David Brassil, Matt Mills, Lindsay Perrin, Bruce Perrin, Maureen Morgan, Mareeca Flannery, Cheryl Kenyon and Maria Kimble.

I am honoured to be the member for Monaro and I am proud that the village of Michelago is in the Monaro electorate. Michelago is a town that has come together on numerous occasions, a community that has

supported its fellow residents in times of need. Be it the recent flooding or the 2009 Christmas bushfires, Michelago is a town that you can depend on and an example of the many regional towns made great by the compassionate people that make up their communities.

Finally, I pay tribute to Sophie's parents, Ralph and Susan. They have displayed enormous strength and fortitude, which I believe are a great source of support for Sophie. They truly are an inspiration to all of us in the Chamber today and they are, as is Sophie, in our thoughts and prayers. We wish them all the best in beating this disease. Michelago has proved that community spirit is alive and well in regional and rural areas.

CABRAMATTA ELECTORATE KHMER NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) [12.35 p.m.]: On Saturday 16 April I had the pleasure of attending the Wat Khemarangsaram temple in Tarlington Parade, Bonnyrigg. The Khmer New Year celebrations were organised by the Khmer Community of NSW and the Cambodian Buddhist Society. I am very privileged to be the State member for such a culturally diverse electorate as Cabramatta. We are fortunate to be what is recognised as one of the most culturally diverse suburbs in Australia. Our rich Australian culture and heritage is the result of different migrant groups coming together over many years and making Cabramatta their home. It is a heritage that we can all be proud of.

I was able to thank the Khmer Community of NSW for inviting me to be part of such a significant event. Khmer New Year gives us an opportunity to experience the unique traditions of Cambodian culture and celebrate what makes our community so special. Cabramatta has acquired a very distinctive South-East Asian character. Refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia, China and Laos have made Cabramatta their home and brought with them many skills and traditions that they have shared with the community. The Khmer Community of NSW was formed to provide settlement services for newly arriving Cambodians. The majority of new refugees settled in and around Cabramatta and the Khmer Community of NSW has provided many services for the Khmer people.

With the arrival of the Venerable Long Sakkhone, a Cambodian Buddhist monk, it was realised there was a great need to build a temple. A large parcel of land was acquired by the Khmer Community of NSW to build a temple and a community centre. Associating as a community is a very important part of life in the Khmer culture. The Khmer people mostly funded the construction of the temple and it was officially opened in 1990. Twice a week, monks from the Wat Khemarangsaram temple have outings to the Cabramatta shopping centre and to Khmer people's homes where they receive ritual food offerings. These monks are cared for by the community, and elderly devotees who live at the temple prepare meals for the monks on a daily basis.

The monks perform many rituals and celebrations for the community. As well as attending funerals and wakes, the monks perform one-month birth anniversaries—parents of a newborn baby have a large party to celebrate the baby's first month of life. Offerings are presented at this time and there are special rituals that include the holy Godmother, who is believed to be the protector of the new child. After the prayers and ceremonies, guests have a happy one-month birthday party at which they eat the ceremonial offerings of food. The temple is host to many rituals and celebrations that are well attended not only by the Cambodians but also by the wider community. I took the opportunity to congratulate the Khmer Community of NSW and the Cambodian Buddhist Society on their commitment to the Cambodian community, and their contribution to Cabramatta and the wider community.

Living in such a multicultural area it is important to have communities that support one another and encourage cultural awareness. I feel so fortunate that we have communities such as these working to achieve the same goals. I acknowledge some of the people who attended and helped us celebrate the Khmer New Year. They included: Mr Paul Lynch, the member for Liverpool; the Venerable Long Sakkhone, the chief monk of the Wat Khemarangsaram temple; Ms Lina Tjoeng, the President of the Khmer Community of NSW Incorporated; Mr Kin Hou, the President of the Cambodian Buddhist Society of NSW Incorporated; Mrs Kimsour Sovannary, the First Secretary to the Royal Embassy of Cambodia; Mr Brian White, the President of the Buddhist Council of New South Wales; and Mr Stephen Thomas, acting superintendent and relieving police commander at Fairfield. I was able to thank everyone who came to share in the celebration and wish them good health, prosperity and happiness for the New Year, and I also wish the same to everybody in this House.

OATLEY ELECTORATE LIONS CLUBS

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) [12.39 p.m.]: I inform the House of two very successful Lions club functions that I was fortunate enough to attend over the past few weeks. As I am sure members would be aware,

Lions Club International is a service organisation with more than 45,000 clubs and more than 1.3 million members in 206 countries throughout the world. The Lions club was established in 1917 with the motto "We Serve", and there is no more fitting term by which to describe the important work they do right throughout Australia, but particularly in my local community. There are more than 10 clubs in the St George region and they all provide invaluable volunteer work throughout the community. I have been fortunate enough to be a member of the Lions club for close to 10 years, and it has been a highly rewarding experience.

On 16 June at the Kogarah Golf Club I had the great benefit of being master of ceremonies for the recent changeover of the executive of the St George Lions Club. It was a great occasion to get together and celebrate the achievements of the executive and to prepare for another busy year under a new leadership team. I acknowledge the outgoing executive led by Richard Kitching and look forward to working with the incoming executive led by the new President, John Craig, and the Secretary who is John's wife, Lesley Craig. I state for the record my appreciation of the outgoing District Governor, John Harrison, and his wife, Tina, and congratulate them on their achievements over the past 12 months.

Furthermore, on 21 June I attended the Combined 2011 Changeover Dinner at the Mortdale RSL for the Lions club of Oatley and the Oatley Leo Club. That was another great night. I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to those who put up their hand to be involved in the executive. This year the clubs elected John Perkins and Agnes Chan to lead them for the next 12 months. Our volunteers are precious enough as it is, but to volunteer even more time to become involved in leadership is truly deserving of recognition. The executive of all Lions clubs across the St George region are to be congratulated. The changeover dinners will continue throughout the next few weeks.

I am very much looking forward to attending the Changeover Dinner for the Lugarno Lioness and Lions on 2 July, which also will take place at the Kogarah Golf Club. Members of the club have been doing a lot of work on autism awareness and associated issues, particularly young children in education. That is an endeavour I strongly support. It is very dear to my heart. Our local Lions clubs across the St George area have raised much-needed funds for the St George Hospital, the Georges River College, the St John Ambulance, the Australian Lions Drug Awareness committee, the Royal Flying Doctors Service, the Silverdale Autism Foundation—which has a function that I will attend tonight, MS, Penshurst Public School, Jeans for Genes, and Prostate Cancer. I congratulate Lions clubs in my local community for the work they have done.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): As President of the New South Wales Parliamentary Lions Club, I take this opportunity to congratulate all the Lions clubs in the St George area on a successful year. I wish them every success in the next year.

BULLI HOSPITAL

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) [12.43 p.m.]: I join with the member for Oatley and others in congratulating Lions clubs on their work within our local electorates and broader communities. I draw to the attention of the House a very important matter in my local area. It concerns a facility that is just outside my electorate boundary, but which serves the northern Illawarra district, which includes the Keira electorate. The Bulli hospital is a 58-bed district hospital that provides acute geriatric, surgical and emergency department services, and takes a leading role in the provision of ophthalmology and ear, nose and throat surgical services for the people of the Illawarra.

I am very concerned that a commitment given by the former Labor Government for a \$9.4 million health facility at Bulli hospital, which was secured for the benefit of the Illawarra area prior to the 2011 election, will not be honoured. The health facility will take enormous pressure off the local health system. I am sure members of the House have significant challenges within their own electorates, but funding of the health centre is very important for the Keira electorate.

I am very concerned that the \$9.4 million community health facility will not receive funding from the Government. Since being elected to Parliament, I have lobbied for the provision of the funding because the health centre is important infrastructure for the Illawarra district. The health facility will take an enormous amount of pressure off the Wollongong Hospital, which is a large regional hospital in the Wollongong electorate, and from the broader health system. The centre is designed to provide child and family health services, age and extended care services, public dental services, allied health services, generalist nursing, chronic disease and group services, and support and health information services for the northern Illawarra.

This is an important commitment that I will continue to advocate for every single day. It is vital for this health centre to be delivered for the people of northern Illawarra and the broader Illawarra region. The health policy area is very near and dear to my heart. Health issues always should be the subject of a bipartisan approach. The Government's refusal to guarantee funding for this facility concerns me greatly. I have again written to the Minister for Health urging her to make that commitment. I have sought a meeting at the Bulli hospital with leading doctors, medical personnel and nurses to discuss the important role that the Bulli Hospital will play in the future delivery of health care and its role in taking the strain off existing services.

At this stage the Minister for Health has refused my request for the meeting because the hospital is just outside my electorate but inside the electorate of Heathcote. The member for Heathcote and Acting-Speaker, Mr Evans, knows as well as I do that the community health centre for which I am seeking funding is vital to the Illawarra region generally. Health facilities do not have electoral boundaries. When my one-year-old child is sick, he either goes to the Bulli Hospital or the Wollongong Hospital even though we are residents of the Keira electorate.

There are many constituents of the Keira electorate who use the Bulli hospital's facilities. The Minister for Health should come good on this commitment of the State Government. There are difficulties with funding and I understand that, but the provision of health facilities in the Illawarra is important. I am passionate about services being delivered to the Illawarra region. I take a bipartisan approach to the delivery of health services, but I must ensure that the House understands the need for the Minister to commit to delivery of this important community health facility at the Bulli hospital that, among other things, will take the strain off public health facilities and resources in the Keira electorate and more broadly in the Illawarra region.

ORANGE EX-SERVICES CLUB

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange) [12.48 p.m.]: I draw to the attention of the House the recent success of the Orange Ex-Services Club in winning a bronze award in the New South Wales Government's Sustainability Advantage Program. The Sustainability Advantage Program supports organisations through access to expertise, training, tools and a network of like-minded organisations to improve environmental performance. Through the program, businesses and organisations have achieved substantial waste energy reductions, cost savings and water savings.

The Orange Ex-Services Club was one of 63 businesses to be presented with an award by the Minister for the Environment, Robyn Parker. The Orange Ex-Services Club was the only business in Orange to ever have received an award through the program. The club's achievement is made even greater by the fact that it has been a part of the program for only 12 months. The Orange Ex-Services Club identified the need to adopt a community and environmental leadership position with its decision to integrate sustainable practices into its core business structure.

Orange Ex-Services Club joined the Sustainability Advantage program in December 2009 and began implementing sustainable practices in January 2010 under the guidance of the program as well as being assisted by Simon Wright of Simply Sustainable. Orange Ex-Services Club has lowered its expenses and in many cases covered the costs of initiatives implemented. The club has reduced water and energy use, cut its printing, sourced environmentally friendly products, donated unused food and old blankets to local charities, and raised community awareness of sustainable practices.

In the past 12 months the ex-services club has lowered its water consumption by 27 per cent, an overall cost saving of 25 per cent; lowered the country club's electricity use by 24 per cent, an overall cost saving of 10 per cent; and lowered the Templer's Mill Motel water consumption by 15 per cent, an overall cost saving of 15 per cent. All three are examples of how the club has saved money over the past 12 months and also helped the environment. Overall, the club has saved the equivalent of 1.4 Olympic-size swimming pools or 3.5 million litres of water in one year. This is a tremendous effort, especially in Orange where lowering water use is a high priority for the entire community.

The Orange Ex-Services Club has a long history of supporting the community by providing outstanding entertainment and sporting facilities for the community and its members. The club has a membership base of 13,900, which is an average membership of one in three households. In 2010 the club proudly provided more than \$150,000 through cash donations or in-kind support to 45 community groups. The ex-services club plays an important role within the community, so I am pleased that it has used its reach to take a leadership role in

sustainability practices and promoting sustainable living. I commend the New South Wales Office of Environment and Heritage, which administers the Sustainability Advantage program, and also organisations and businesses within our community that are leading change or offering expertise to others.

The Central West Catchment Management Authority, Essential Energy and Central NSW Councils recently hosted a sustainability forum in Orange to help local businesses understand the practical benefits of environmentally sustainable businesses and support that is available. I was fortunate to attend this forum and thank the Central West Catchment Management Authority, Essential Energy and Central NSW Councils for staging the event. The Orange Ex-Services Club took part in the forum to demonstrate how its initiatives help the environment and the Orange community, and also to show the financial benefits of cutting energy costs.

Once again I congratulate the Orange Ex-Services' Club, its Chief Executive Officer Cameron Provost, the board of directors, the staff and club members on the bronze award and a job well done. I know they will continue to work to further reduce waste and receive silver or gold awards in the future. The Orange Ex-Services Club is an invaluable part of the Orange community. I commend the club for its community spirit and leadership. Our electorate is justly proud of this great club.

TRIBUTE TO REX MOSSOP

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Treasurer) [12.52 p.m.]: I speak about a tragic event that occurred in my community last weekend: the death of Rex "The Moose" Mossop at age 83. He was a rugby league and rugby union player, and sports broadcaster legend. His career highlights are many and well played. He started playing for Manly in 1944 when he was only 16 years—an incredible feat. He became a Wallaby in 1949 and took part in the first tour of all tours to New Zealand. He switched to rugby league in 1951 and played for the professional English club Leigh, but in 1956 he returned to the club he loved—Manly. He was an aggressive front-row forward and played 136 games for the Manly club. When he retired in 1964 at age 36 he had played about 500 games across the two codes.

People probably do not realise that his nickname, "The Moose", came from the way he ran: he would lower his head and charge with his arms flailing—the adage goes that he looked like a wounded moose. Obviously it stuck. He had a big heart and played hard at every opportunity. He adopted the same approach to his commentating. Despite having no broadcasting experience, the story is that he beat about 60 applicants to secure the role of Channel 7's sports director in 1963. He became a favourite face and voice of rugby league. Indeed, I acknowledge that I once performed a skit pretending to be Rex Mossop. However, it was a rather lame attempt, notwithstanding his legendary status in every lounge room.

We are all familiar with his tautologies. The most notable one, "He seems to be favouring a groin injury at the top of his leg" somehow got to the top of the pops in Mossop-isms. They made him someone enjoyable to listen to, and ultimately delight in. The tautology was part of the man and his character. He made watching sport and rugby league particularly so much more enjoyable. There was also a sad side to Rex Mossop. I remember a day only a few years ago when I passed Rex Mossop sitting on his regular bench at Manly. We started to talk and he revealed the deep sadness of someone dealing with Alzheimer's disease. Unfortunately, his wife contracted the disease before him.

I will be forever haunted by the look in his eyes. I could see unbelievable sadness in his face as he talked. He said, "You have no idea what it's like to have someone who you love so much begin to have no idea who you are." That sort of pain can only be realised through personal experience. Seeing him that day made me forever aware of the tragic impact of Alzheimer's. Ironically, he contracted the disease and passed away as a result of it. Many tributes have been given since his passing. Peter Peters—known as Zorba—wrote in the *Manly Daily* paying tribute to Rex:

Mossop was one of a kind. His great mate Ken Arthurson reminded me yesterday that he had never once seen Mossop take a backward step in his football or media career.

Mossop passed away on Friday night, a shadow of the strapping man who was always on show with nothing more than his budge smugglers on every morning on the first bench to the right of Manly Surf Club on the walkway to Fairy Bower.

Rex Peers Mossop loved everything Manly and Manly loved the Moose right back.

I could not have expressed it better than Zorba. Ken Vessey also wrote in the *Manly Daily* about Rex's passing:

I would stop and talk to Rex, where he sat most days enjoying the sun at North Steyne Beach, about his playing days and the latest happenings in the world; he was a great gentleman and would always make you laugh with his humour; it was a pleasure to have known Rex and he will always be remembered by those who were lucky enough to have met him; Rest in Peace Rex.

I say well done to Ken and to Zorba for articulating their memories. I pass on my tribute to the club, its fans and supporters and, obviously, pay great tribute to the man who was the Moose. I pass on my deep condolences to his family. I acknowledge that Brad Hazzard, the member for Wakehurst, also passes on his condolences to his family, particularly his wife, Joan, and his sons, Greg and Kirk. Tomorrow I will be delighted to attend a service at St Matthews Church, Manly, to honour Rex Mossop, but to the community, all of the Sea Eagles fraternity and rugby league members: Rex Mossop might have passed away, but his legend never will. On behalf of everyone in this House I pay tribute to Rex Mossop.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): I thank the member for Manly. It is fitting that the Minister for Sport and Recreation, who made a ministerial statement about the passing of Rex Mossop on the first sitting day this week, is at the table. I acknowledge also the contribution Rex made to the Men of League. He attended a number of lunches at this Parliament. He always enjoyed himself and was a gentleman in the true sense. He will be sadly missed by all followers of rugby league and other sports in this country.

HAWKESBURY RELAY FOR LIFE

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) [12.58 p.m.]: On 28 May I had the pleasure of attending the Hawkesbury Relay for Life at Hawkesbury Showground. As members will know, Relay for Life is an annual fundraising event that assists in raising funds for medical research, family support and other ways to fight the great scourge of cancer. Cancer is the greatest killer in our society and 2005 had the dubious honour of being the first year when more than 100,000 cancer diagnoses were made in Australia. Sadly, this figure is increasing, largely as a result of our ageing population. Statistics of that order mean that throughout Australia every five minutes of every hour of every day of the year one person is diagnosed with cancer. This results in more than 39,000 deaths Australia-wide every year. This represents a massive human cost in sickness, sadness and lost opportunities.

Many of us do not need to imagine the hole left in families, left without a parent, a grandparent, a sibling or even a spouse, never to be present again at a family gathering, sharing laughter and good times. It is sadder still when it happens to be someone young. Happy will be the day when no parent has to bury their child because they were taken by cancer. Unfortunately this occurred to my parents, as my younger brother, Bernard, was taken by cancer just as he reached his twenty-eighth birthday. So it is no surprise that I have a commitment to this cause, to continue the fight on behalf of all those who experience that.

Cancer also places an immense burden on our health system. There are now more than 775,000 cancer-related admissions or procedures performed every year in Australian hospitals—more than 10 per cent of all hospital activity. More than 300,000 of these actions are due to chemotherapy sessions, followed by actions relating to non-melanoma skin cancers, special screening examinations, secondary cancers and follow-up after surgery for cancer. And the number of hospital actions looks set to increase. Hawkesbury Relay for Life is one of the many community organisations that are complementing the efforts of government in fighting cancer. Since the first Australian Relay for Life in 1999, which raised \$75,000, it has gone from strength to strength and now raises more than \$18 million annually. Last year \$6 million of this was raised in New South Wales. I am proud to say that the Hawkesbury Relay for Life has just announced that its event this year raised more than \$86,000 for the cause.

More than 41 teams and a huge number of individuals attended. Around the clock, they made a continuous procession. The fences of the oval were adorned with photographs of those lost to cancer, but an almost festival atmosphere prevailed. I saw teams from two of our local rotary groups, the local Big W, the Subaru recreational four-wheel drivers club, the local zumba aerobics club, the local tennis club, both town and rural fire brigades, the Richmond Royal Australian Air Force base, a tag team of four masseurs, the Hawkesbury Girl Guides and three different local gymnasiums. There was also a team of school students from Bede Polding College led by a year 12 student; that team, Team Awesome, was led by my son, Ben. These and a huge number of ad hoc groups and individuals representing sufferers, survivors or supporters of those with or lost to cancer pulled together as a community in aid of this worthy cause.

I was so proud to see this. It is the embodiment of all that I want to see in our community. Relays for life are held around Australia on an almost continuous basis, with 27 more planned for various locations in the second half of the year, and eight already in the planning stages for 2012, including the Hawkesbury event. I especially acknowledge the Hawkesbury Relay for Life committee, the chairperson Jenny Hamilton, who is everywhere all year round working towards this cause, Cath Richmond, Cathy Sutton, Cheryle Symonds, Danae Loxton, Deb Cooper, Ellen Hegarty, Gareth Baker, Jo Richards, Jodie Heterick, Katrina Schofield, Linda

Kitchener, Pat Mulligan, Robyne West, Sharon Grech, Vera Tchadovitch and Vicki Longmuir. All of those involved deserve congratulations, and I commend them to the House. I thank them in advance for the 2012 event, which they have already begun planning.

PENRITH HOMELESSNESS

PENRITH VALLEY FUND BUSINESS SLEEPERS

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith) [1.02 p.m.]: Today I raise homelessness in the Penrith region and more specifically the Penrith Valley Fund Business Sleepers event that took place on 3 June at Penrith Paceway. I was able to participate in the event with my colleague the member for Mulgoa and Senator Marise Payne, who is a stalwart of western Sydney and works tirelessly to raise the profile of homelessness not just in western Sydney but across New South Wales and Australia through her role as the shadow Minister for Housing. The event was the first of its kind in Penrith and was established through the United Way Sydney Penrith Valley Fund. The business sleepers had more than 46 participants at its first annual event, and they came together essentially to raise awareness of homelessness in that region.

For many of the participants on the day, it was about ensuring that the rest of the community understood the seriousness of homelessness in our region. It was not so much about the experience, although it gave us some insight into the experience of what rough sleepers who do not have a roof over their head experience. During the evening there were a number of speeches. In particular, reference was made to the importance of funding for swags to provide support for rough sleepers and the ability of swags to provide safer accommodation for rough sleepers. Senator Payne told us about an experience that I will relay to the House. She talked about being at the local gym in Penrith. Another participant, Gai Hawthorn, a representative of Good Guys, was at the same gym.

They were talking about their upcoming participation in the event. Another person in the gym—a personal trainer, I think—turned around and said, "Do we actually have homeless people in Penrith?" When the 46 people there on the night heard that story we recognised the need to increase the level of awareness about homelessness in western Sydney. Those who participated in the business sleepers event made a small contribution towards raising the awareness of homelessness in Penrith to the necessary level. They also raised about \$8,400 towards the purchase of a number of swags, support for homeless facilities and provision of services.

The United Way Sydney Penrith Valley Fund has a committee that comprises representatives of Good Guys, the Penrith Press, Penrith City Council, Westpac, the Penrith Valley Chamber of Commerce, Cool Country Radio and the Nepean Area Disabilities Organisation. Businesses that supported the valley fund sleepers night included Westpac, Good Guys, White Lady Funerals, the Kingswood Florist, the Penrith Business Enterprise Centre, represented by Michael Todd, Website that Works and the *Western Weekender*. I acknowledge the contribution of Troy Dodds, the editor of that paper, who provided an outstanding editorial for Penrith residents to get an understanding about what sleepers went through. Once again he played a critical role in continuing to raise awareness of homelessness in our region.

Other businesses included the Penrith Press, the parents and citizens youth club, Nepean lung and sleep doctors, the member for Mulgoa, Multilock Security, which also made a significant contribution on the evening, and Positive Bookkeeping. The St Marys Band Club, with its indefatigable chief executive officer, Marlene Chifley, raised \$1,500 prior to the event to donate to the cause. The event was held at Penrith Paceway, and several representatives slept out on the night. Another business was HR Success. One property owner in the Penrith central business district, Gordon Henwood, participated.

There were cash donations from organisations in Penrith, including Adventure Preschools, Penrith Ladies Inner Wheel, the Penrith Lions Club and several other small business owners. Bernard Fehon, the founder of the original chief executive officer sleep-out and a resident of Blaxland in the lower mountains, also participated. He joked that we had more people at the Penrith Valley Fund Business Sleepers than what he did at his first event. I acknowledge his fantastic contribution, and the \$3 million he raised at his event earlier this year. It was a fantastic start and it should continue over years to come.

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER DAY OBSERVANCE COMMITTEE

Ms CLOVER MOORE (Sydney) [1.07 p.m.]: Today I want to talk about a celebration that is important not only in my electorate of Sydney but also across the city, that is, the celebration of the National

Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee. There will be a number of events, exhibitions, performances, awards and gatherings, which will continue through July. The origins of National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee can be traced to the emergence of Aboriginal groups in the 1920s, which sought to increase awareness in the wider community of the status and treatment of Indigenous Australians. It is a celebration of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and an opportunity to recognise their contribution in various fields.

As part of National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee Week I will be proudly launching a book on Sydney's Aboriginal history. It will mark a small but symbolically important step. It is a step that reinstates the Aboriginal history of Sydney, a part of the Sydney story which for too long has gone unacknowledged in the stories we tell about our city. Looking at the past, we are helping to build a stronger future where Aboriginal culture and Aboriginal people have an honoured place. The City of Sydney Sustainable City 2030 Plan, which evolved out of extensive consultation across the Sydney community, explicitly calls for greater recognition of the special place of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders.

To help us achieve that, we formed an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisory panel in 2008 with representatives from the local community who have worked hard and provided valuable advice. We know that international visitors, and Sydney people too, want to learn about the world's oldest living culture. Our 2030 strategy includes our proposal for the Eora Journey—a project that will trace culturally important sites from the Sydney Harbour to Redfern. The booklet I will launch is called *Barani-Barrabugu*, meaning, in the Sydney language, Yesterday and Tomorrow, to signify the continuity of Aboriginal people and culture in our city. It is the first step in the Eora Journey, following the city's history program, which engaged Steve Miller in January last year to begin the process of mapping significant sites in the inner city.

Steve, who comes from Museums and Galleries NSW, identified with his team of researchers no less than 255 sites, which were presented to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisory panel in June last year. The panel was excited by his work and established a cultural mapping working group to advise staff on planning *Barani-Barrabugu*. With their advice, the history program has drawn on Steve's research to produce the booklet. Each of the sites is connected with a historical theme such as civil rights, sport and performing arts, and through its connection with these major themes, Redfern itself is testimony to the continuing vitality of Aboriginal culture. Archaeological evidence from places across the city shows the unbroken connection that Aboriginal people have with this place.

Prince Alfred Park, which we are in the midst of renovating, was an Aboriginal camp site until the middle of the nineteenth century, while in the twentieth century another great open space, at The Domain, was often enlivened by the oratory of great fighters for Aboriginal rights like Jack Patten. In 1938 the Australian Hall in Elizabeth Street became the venue for the first Day of Mourning, while in the 1970s Redfern gave rise to the Aboriginal Legal Service, Australia's first Aboriginal medical service and the Aboriginal Housing Company at The Block. Members can read about all these things, and many more, in this wonderful booklet.

I place on record the valuable help of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisory panel, and congratulate Steve Miller, Dr Lisa Murray, who leads the history program, and the panel on this important step forward not only for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, but also for all of Sydney. The city of Sydney's contribution to the National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee Week only begins with this booklet. Events we support include Aboriginal history tours, a knit-in in which Wrap with Love volunteers knit red, black and yellow squares to make blankets for communities in need, and History in Conversation events. Members will have seen our National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee Week banners throughout the city.

We also support celebrations hosted by local groups and organisations, including the Glebe Youth Service and Walla Mulla Family and Community Support services in Woolloomooloo in my electorate. Last year this House supported constitutional recognition of Aboriginal people and we committed to closing the gap on Aboriginal disadvantage. I have asked the Government a number of questions about its plans and targets to achieve this. Aboriginal people are intrinsic to our shared story of Sydney, and Aboriginal culture and history permeate the modern city and give it a depth and resonance beyond the everyday. I join people across Sydney in celebrating National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee Week.

MACARTHUR JUSTICES ASSOCIATION

Mr BRYAN DOYLE (Campbelltown) [1.12 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to speak about the work of volunteers and in particular the justices of the peace of the Macarthur Justices Association. I am pleased to

report that at Campbelltown, the opal of the south-west, the spirit of volunteering is alive and well with our justices of the peace who are members of the Macarthur Justices Association. I report to the House on the meeting of the Macarthur Justices Association last night from 7.30 p.m. to 9.15 p.m. at the special location of Campbelltown Local Court. The Clerk of the Court, Mr Ron Gray, a longstanding servant of the Campbelltown people, facilitated the meeting, allowing the use of the Local Court and, in particular, courtroom No. 4, and the necessary after-hours access.

His Honour Rob Rabbidge, a magistrate of the Campbelltown Local Court, gave a very good presentation to the justices. I am pleased to say that as a police prosecutor I appeared and prosecuted matters in front of Mr Rabbidge. In the 40-minute speech and question time His Honour spoke on topical issues for justices including identification of deponents. He noted the recent court case relating to the disputed identification of a woman who was wearing a burqa. He also touched on the need for justices of the peace to identify deponents through documents and seeing their faces. He also explained court processes, including the drink-driving laws, and the state-of-the-art dock in courtroom No. 4. The presentation was very well received by the justices present and in token of their appreciation certificates were presented to His Honour and on behalf of Ron Gray.

The Macarthur Justices Association is affiliated with the New South Wales Justices Association and provides a wonderful volunteer justice of the peace service to the people of Campbelltown. The justices include Juanita Nolan, JP, who is the President; Peter Enderby, JP, the Secretary; Joe Abou Halloun, JP, the Reverend Tali Ofu, JP, and Danny Bernel, JP, to name a few. These justices man several volunteer desks throughout Campbelltown. They can be found at Campbelltown Local Court from Monday to Friday during office hours. They also have a special desk at Campbelltown Mall, a well-known shopping centre, on Saturday morning, and in the Narellan town centre on Saturday morning.

The amount of volunteer work provided by justices of the peace to the people of Campbelltown is simply staggering. They assist 14,500 people per annum and I can say with some confidence that few people in Campbelltown would not be able to find a justice of the peace, certainly not in the opal of the south-west. Last year the justices witnessed 31,398 documents. That is a lot of stamping, signing and oath taking. On projected figures this is expected to increase to more than 35,000 documents. The association provides ongoing professional training of justices of the peace. This is very important because on appointment justices of the peace take a judicial oath and the professional performance of their volunteer duty is vital.

One of the proudest duties of being a member of Parliament is to interview applicants for appointment to the position of justice of the peace. I take the opportunity to urge all justices of the peace to join their local professional association and contribute to their local community. The Macarthur Justices Association meet at the Campbelltown Catholic Club on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 7.30 p.m. It is important to note that the Campbelltown Catholic Club donates that meeting room free to our justices. It is just another way the club movement supports our local communities. Justices of the peace have a long and proud tradition of serving the people of New South Wales. I am proud to be a member of the Macarthur Justices Association, as well as their patron.

HUNTER POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL INSTITUTE

Mr TIMOTHY OWEN (Newcastle) [1.17 p.m.]: I inform the Parliament of the great work being conducted by the team at the Hunter Postgraduate Medical Institute. The institute was developed in 1981 and is an independent, non-government, non-profit medical educational body, which provides quality, independent continuing professional development to the health profession throughout the Hunter, New England, Northern Tablelands, Western Plains, mid North Coast and Central Coast regions of New South Wales. It is a great regional organisation.

The work of the Hunter Postgraduate Medical Institute and its members is good news for the medical profession and, importantly, our local communities, which benefit from the improved health standards that come from professional and knowledgeable medical practitioners. The team at the institute strive to work in close collaboration with the faculty of health of the University of Newcastle and with other educational bodies to promote the principle of lifetime learning for all medical practitioners so as to progressively improve the standards of medical practice in the region.

A few weeks ago when I toured the institute I was fortunate enough to meet with the leaders at the Hunter Postgraduate Medical Institute, including Dr Hewson, Jean Walsh and Dr Sales. I must say it was a fantastic tour. I was thoroughly impressed by their professionalism and commitment to not only the medical

fraternity but also our local community. I was impressed by the eagerness of the institute's members to continue to learn and not rest on their laurels once they have completed their degree. Through its programs the institute encourages the continuance of learning and growth. I believe that in order to continue to be relevant, and indeed successful, we must all be receptive to new ways of thinking, which comes from opening one's mind to new schools of thought. There is a saying that I think most of us in the House would be familiar with: without your health you do not have anything.

I commend the Hunter Postgraduate Medical Institute for the role that it has played in improving the health of our community, by educating and informing its members to ensure that they are at the forefront of medical technologies always. The Hunter Postgraduate Medical Institute is constantly looking at ways to improve its educational delivery and I intend to do what I can, as the local member, to help them operate successfully in my local region. I believe that the team at the institute is focused on building relationships with the health service industry and as such it is a fantastic professional Newcastle institute. I commend its work to this House.

RAAF BASE RICHMOND

Mr BART BASSETT (Londonderry) [1.20 p.m.]: I refer to a matter in today's *Daily Telegraph* about an investigation and study into moving defence facilities to northern Australia. Hawkesbury City Council and I have been concerned about the talk yet again that Richmond Royal Australian Air Force base site could become Sydney's second airport. How many times does our community need to have this discussion with the Federal Government and those pursuing the idea of the Richmond site as a second airport for Sydney? We continue to assert that it is not suitable for Sydney's second airport for a number of reasons. First, I highlight that the current base at Richmond has a single runway in an east-west direction and at each end is an historic town, being Windsor or Richmond, both of which comprise part of the three Macquarie towns.

To operate as a second airport Richmond would require expensive infrastructure to make it cost effective, such as fuel, upgraded rail lines and roads, just to name a few. It would require a north-south runway to be built to allow for aircraft to operate at full capacity and to allow for international flights into Richmond. I remind those same councils in western Sydney that protested against Badgerys Creek as a site for a second runway that they will now be brought into play with approach paths on a north-south runway. The Royal Australian Air Force base at Richmond is a fantastic facility for the community and for Australia. We support 100 per cent defence personnel and their families, and defence operations; we always have and always will.

The Royal Australian Air Force base at Richmond is not just a defence facility per se but it provides wonderful support to the Pacific rim during times of natural disasters. Recently it provided domestic support, when required. It is important to have an operational Hercules in a major Sydney city to move people and medical expertise quickly to the Pacific rim so that airports without tertiary hospital supports in northern Australia and medical expertise can be taken quickly by Hercules to those facilities to support people in need. Major disasters require significant medical expertise. The air force at Richmond is not just a defence asset but an asset for the nation to play a role on the world's stage; it enables us to support our neighbours and friends in countries in the Pacific rim. We must continue that support and the air force base at Richmond is an extremely important asset.

I repeat that the Royal Australian Air Force Base at Richmond is not the ideal location for Sydney's second airport for the reasons I have already outlined. Indeed, I reinforce the point that the weather conditions, approach paths and the ridge line on the east-west runway will not work for commercial aircraft operating regular public transport-type operations. Prior to the 2007 Federal election as mayor of Hawkesbury City Council I wrote a letter to the then Howard Government and the then Opposition. They both replied before the 2007 Federal election and committing to the base remaining as a defence facility. The then Opposition—now Labor Government—wrote back and said:

Labor has no plans to alter the status of RAAF Base Richmond, and should we be elected to Government later this year Richmond will continue as a permanent operational facility.

Recently the council received another letter from the Parliamentary Secretary of the Prime Minister's office on this same matter that stated:

The Government will continue to use the Air Force Base Richmond as a Defence operational facility, consistent with its pre-election commitment.

I call on the Federal Government to stand by those commitments and to stop holding inquiries into using Richmond Royal Australian Air Force base as a second Sydney airport.

INNER WEST LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) [1.25 p.m.]: I had the pleasure of attending the 2011 Inner West Local Business Awards, which are unique in that some 170,000 votes were cast to determine the finalists in the various categories. The response reflects the level of community involvement and recognises the powerhouse of our economy, the small business sector. Special thanks must go to local and visionary organiser Mr Steven Lowe from Precedent Productions, who has run the awards for a number of years. He had a dream some 25 years ago to grow an event, which is now the premier event, to recognise the achievements of small business in our State. The event was sponsored by a number of organisations including, but not limited to: Canterbury BMW, Burwood Council, Birkenhead Point Shopping Centre, Drummoyne, and Burwood Plaza, just to name a few. The media partners were *C!ao* magazine, 2RDJ and the *Burwood Scene*, a local inner-west newspaper headed by the editor Belinda Noonan.

I am very proud that 11 of the 26 winners of the awards came from businesses in the Drummoyne electorate. Some of the categories were best automotive services, bakery-cake shop, beauty services, butchery, café, child care, fashion, fast-food, et cetera. Winners included Craig Cook of Prime Quality Meats for best butchery; Farinhas Continental Delicatessen for best delicatessen-gourmet food; Renaissance Boutique, Concord, for best fashion outlet; Giftness, Drummoyne, for best health and fitness; Voila Maison, Concord, for best home furnishing-electrical; Otto Pezzi, Mortlake, for best pizza restaurant; Ce Cilia Cheng from Terry White Chemist, North Strathfield, for best youth award; Ocean Foods, Drummoyne, which has a reputation throughout New South Wales, for best seafood outlet; the wonderful Bakehouse Café is next door, and the Deputy-Speaker is fondly aware of that establishment.

I congratulate all the winners and participants in the Inner West Local Business Awards. We must support and encourage small business. There are approximately 650,000 small businesses in this State. I know that this Government values and appreciates their role, which is why it encourages policies that do not strangle the ability, flexibility and enthusiasm of business.

Private members' statements concluded.

[The Deputy-Speaker (Mr Thomas George) left the chair at 1.30 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]

DEATH OF RONALD EDWARD ALEXANDER WARD, A FORMER CLERK OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

The SPEAKER: It is with regret that I inform the House of the passing this morning of Mr Ronald Edward Alexander Ward, a former Clerk of the Legislative Assembly. Mr Ward served the House as Clerk from 1 February 1974 to 18 February 1981. On behalf of all members and officers, I offer the deepest condolences to Mr Ward's family for the loss sustained.

Members and officers stood in their places as a mark of respect.

ASSENT TO BILLS

Assent to the following bill reported:

Crimes Amendment (Murder of Police Officers) Bill 2011

REPRESENTATION OF MINISTER ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I inform the House that, in the absence of the Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Healthy Lifestyles, and Minister for Western New South Wales, the Deputy Premier, Minister for Trade and Investment, and Minister for Regional Infrastructure and Services will answer questions today in respect to Western New South Wales, and the Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research will answer questions today in relation to Mental Health and Healthy Lifestyles.

QUESTION TIME

[Question time commenced at 2.17 p.m.]

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: My question without notice is addressed to the Premier. Is the Premier aware of any adverse findings by the Independent Commission Against Corruption concerning any of his Cabinet Ministers?

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: No.

ELECTORAL REFORM

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: My question is directed to the Premier. What action is the Government taking to reform the State's electoral laws?

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I thank the member for Tweed for his question. I have to say that, being the State's most northern member, in that his electorate borders the State of Queensland, he understands what poor electoral laws and electoral rorts can produce. On the day on which the former defeated member for Monaro is returning to another place, people across this State will be thinking about electoral laws and wondering how it is possible that someone defeated so comprehensively by the new member for Monaro can be recycled so quickly—even before, apparently, his superannuation entitlements run out. Electoral reform was certainly on the mind of a prominent New South Wales citizen last night. Senator Steve Hutchins was certainly thinking about it when he spoke in Federal Parliament yesterday about how terminally damaged the Australian Labor Party brand was in New South Wales. Senator Hutchins said:

Voters will reflect on the behaviour of key figures within the New South Wales Parliament and the union movement before the last election without mercy for a very long time.

What was once the most durable and effective state Government in the country—

I would say that is arguable—

is now a depleted husk of an opposition.

And that is not arguable. Senator Hutchins traversed some of the low lights of the past four years, including Labor's sell-off of electricity and its early closure of the Parliament. He concluded by saying:

The damage was well and truly done ... and New South Wales Labor, now led by an undeserving John Robertson, is in opposition after four of the most shameful years in [the State's] history.

We all agree that we need a strong Opposition in New South Wales, but even Labor Party stalwarts are now conceding that that is not what we have in this Parliament. We will not let that get in the way of reforming this State. We will ensure that we press ahead with the reforms that are needed to fix up New South Wales. That includes a long overdue review of the State's electoral legislation, to bring it in line with the twenty-first century. As highlighted by the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters in its reviews of the 2003 and 2007 elections, the State's electoral laws are in need of review and are in need of an overhaul. Labor governments rejected that bipartisan committee's recommendations.

When I met with the Electoral Commissioner, Mr Colin Barry, after this year's State election he made the same point about the need for review of the State's electoral laws. The Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act was originally passed by this Chamber in 1912, and over the century that it has operated the nature of politics, parties and political campaigning has changed enormously. What were once street corner meetings, pamphlets and radio and cinema broadcasts have been replaced, whether for better or for worse, by direct mail, robocalls and online campaigning.

The Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act is 30 years old and, similarly, the matters that it seeks to regulate have suffered significant change over those three decades. I ask members to think about what things were like when it was passed in 1981. It was before the internet, it was when Joh Bjelke-Petersen was Premier of Queensland, and it was actually the year before the *Today* show started—that was for Ben Fordham. The Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act and the Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act have been amended on numerous occasions, sometimes by those opposite without reference to the State's electoral authorities, but they have never been subject to historic comprehensive reviews to ensure that the regulation of elections, election funding and political donations offer the public the strongest guarantee of free, open and honest elections.

I am pleased to announce that following the re-establishment of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters there will be reviews of both Acts. In line with the advice of the Electoral Commissioner, the committee will be asked to review the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act first and then follow with a review of the Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act. Like Colin Barry, I want the reviews completed by 2012, and I am grateful to him and to the New South Wales Electoral Commission for agreeing to cooperate and work with those reviews.

The reviews will give anybody interested in the matter the opportunity to make submissions, and the committee's reports will provide guidance on how to ensure that we have the best electoral laws in the nation. Today I have also given notice of a motion for reforms of political donations and election funding laws in line with our election commitments. We know how those opposite, working in concert with their evil twins upstairs in the upper House, allowed unions a free pass through the State's election funding and donations laws. We are determined to put an end to that rort, as we are determined to put an end to any Labor union rort in this State.

MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: My question is directed to the Premier. Did the Premier intentionally mislead the House today or was he unaware that the Independent Commission Against Corruption found that there was evidence to warrant consideration of the prosecution of the now Minister for Local Government for an offence of common law bribery?

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I was asked whether there was any adverse finding about a member of my Government. My Government was formed I think 88 days ago. I am not aware of an inquiry into a member of my Government and I am not aware of an adverse finding against a member of my Government over that period.

REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr TROY GRANT: My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. How has the Government begun the process of rebuilding regional New South Wales?

Mr ANDREW STONER: I thank the member for Dubbo for that very good question. I am proud to say that there has been more good news for regional New South Wales from this Government in the last 89 days than it has seen from Labor in the last decade. After 16 long years of Labor neglect, the people of regional New South Wales consigned so-called Country Labor to the dustbin of history. The rot started in 2003: Harry Woods—gone; Wayne Smith—gone. In 2007: Comrade Blackie—gone; Napping Neville—gone. In 2011: Bundy Bear—gone; and Whiteboard Whan was gonsky, but he has been recycled back to the losers lounge. In relation to that issue, the Leader of the Opposition had this to say on 8 April this year:

... we were given a message by the people of New South Wales and they passed judgement on a number of our colleagues and that decision's been taken. I'm not going to try and somehow sidestep or ignore the decision that's been taken.

Well, guess what? He is there. What has happened? It must be the renewal that we were promised. I will tell you what has happened—Currawong and Tony Kelly shoehorned old Whiteboard back into the upper House. No matter, we know what he is up to because we actually find out about his branch meetings before they even finish—we get the minutes—so we have our hand on what is happening there. But I digress.

This Government has hit the ground running when it comes to rebuilding regional New South Wales. Our regional kick start plan has payroll tax rebates for 40,000 new jobs, regional relocation grants for 40,000 families and 30 per cent of the Restart New South Wales infrastructure fund. All of these elements have been legislated in this place. We have commenced an audit of mining-affected communities so that we can help with their infrastructure needs; we have a \$1 billion fund to help local councils in regional New South Wales with their infrastructure backlog; we have established a standalone Department of Primary Industries; we are legislating to protect prime agricultural land from mining activity; we are tackling cross-border anomalies with the appointment of a cross-border commissioner; and we have reinstated Dalwood, the outstanding residential program for kids with reading difficulties from rural and remote New South Wales.

There is much, much more, but time will not permit me to detail fully all of our achievements for regional New South Wales. I note the member for Cessnock has been furiously trying to get my attention, muttering something about being a so-called Country Labor member. If he is, he is the last of the dodo birds. If I were the member for Cessnock, I would not be drawing too much attention to myself. We heard from the Treasurer about Wasim Akram and reverse swing the other day. The member for Cessnock has achieved a remarkable feat in terms of reverse swing—compared to 2007, 8 per cent the wrong way, and compared to 2003, 11 per cent the wrong way. To add insult to injury, the comparison is with the milkman.

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order: Madam Speaker, recently you made a ruling in relation to members referring to other members by their correct titles, which is something that Mr Comedy is not doing.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will refer to members by their correct title.

Mr ANDREW STONER: The milkman was the former member for Cessnock. After 16 years of Labor neglect of regional areas of New South Wales the Liberal-Nationals Government is already working hard to rebuild our regions.

MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: My question is directed to the Premier. Why did he promote to the position of Minister for Local Government someone whose actions in accepting campaign donations from property developers in return for access to Ministers was found by the Independent Commission Against Corruption to warrant prosecution for the offence of common law bribery?

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: It is absolutely extraordinary that is all the Opposition has to say, despite having had the chance to ask approximately 100 questions during the many weeks of the 2011 autumn session of Parliament—a session unsurpassed in the history of this Parliament. Never before has this Parliament sat for so many days or for so long, or done so much good work. Does the Leader of the Opposition hammer us day after day over the issues that concern the people of this State?

Government members: No.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: Does he ask us about what the Minister for Transport is doing in relation to transport?

Government members: No.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: Does he ask us what the Minister for Education is doing to improve our schools, TAFE and university systems?

Government members: No.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: Does he ask us what any one of the Ministers is doing to improve the mess left to us by the Labor Party?

Government members: No.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: The recurring theme of his questions is that he will ask whatever his union masters want him to ask. That is why he has been nicknamed mego around this place; not amigo, for he is nobody's friend—as Morris Iemma and every other previous Labor leader will attest.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question is very specific: Why was the member for Ballina promoted to Cabinet by the Premier? It is very simple.

The SPEAKER: Order! The preamble indicates the Premier is answering the question.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: Yesterday I heard from some Labor staff members in the elevator that MEGO stands for "my eyes glaze over". Whenever the Leader of the Opposition begins to speak my eyes glaze over. However, he is referred to as amigo by one person, the member for Maroubra, who is still smarting about the member who has done the most work over recent weeks—the member for Toongabbie.

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will come to order.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: The member for Toongabbie has taken a leaf out of the book of the Leader of the Opposition. Members know how many members of the Government owe their election to the Leader of the Opposition sandbagging himself into the safe seat of Blacktown for the 2011 election. Workers, Labor Party volunteers and union staff were ripped out of seats on the Central Coast, the Hunter and across western Sydney to save the career of MEGO.

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Premier has not even begun to address the question. Madam Speaker, I ask you to direct him to answer the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier will respond to the question.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I will, Madam Speaker. I have the utmost confidence that the member for Ballina will do a fantastic job as the Minister for Local Government. Twenty-five years ago the Independent Commission Against Corruption conducted an inquiry. The electors of Ballina have had seven electoral opportunities to pass judgement upon him. There has not been a skerrick of scandal or a whiff of inquiry about the member for Ballina for 25 years. He has done an extraordinary job as a shadow Minister and is doing a very good job as the Minister for Local Government. He is doing such a good job that even The Greens support him in Ballina. No-one in country New South Wales has a higher pro-Greens vote than has the member for Ballina—and in spite of that I still appointed him to the Ministry!

I will not be lectured by Labor members. In government, members opposite could find their way to the Independent Commission Against Corruption blindfolded. The Independent Commission Against Corruption had to install a revolving door. I certainly will not be lectured by the member for Blacktown, who appoints to his frontbench somebody who disobeyed police orders on two occasions. The shadow road safety Minister had an extraordinary episode with a very expensive Italian car. And the member for Marrickville pursued what was referred to as a \$1.2 billion Department of Community Services improvement program that led to more deaths of children who had been notified to the department than ever before in the State's history.

TRANSPORT SERVICES

Mr CHARLES CASUSCELLI: Madam Speaker—

[Interruption]

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Strathfield has the call. All members will come to order.

Mr CHARLES CASUSCELLI: My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. What progress has the Government made in the establishment of the Integrated Transport Authority and its other transport commitments?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I thank the member for Strathfield for his excellent question and for his keen interest in public transport. The O'Farrell Government's approach to transport in New South Wales is poles apart from the approach adopted by members opposite when they were in government. They used to announce it, cancel it, re-announce it, disguise it, go back to plan A, then give up plan A altogether, and then go to plan B. In contrast to that, this Government is getting on with the job of fixing transport in New South Wales. We are well on the way to establishing our Integrated Transport Authority, which will mean that for the first time planning and policy will be fully integrated across all modes of transport, including roads and ports.

Six deputy directors general are being recruited to head important new divisions. I can neither confirm nor deny that the Member for Keira has applied for any or all of these positions. It is true that the political connections of the member for Keira assisted him to become a deputy director general of the Department of Transport after he tired of working for the Labor transport Minister of the day. But I can assure the House that even if the member for Keira applied he would be unsuccessful because he lacks the required skills and experience for such an important job. Not counting the member for Keira, there has been overwhelming interest in those key positions. There is no shortage of talented people who are keen to be part of the O'Farrell Government's new and much-improved transport plan. I inform the House that more than 350 applications have been received for the six positions. There has been an outstanding level of interest in being part of this exciting new era for transport for New South Wales.

But the Government has done so much more than that in its first 100 days, and I turn now to discuss light rail. We have given light rail the support it deserves after years of neglect by members opposite. In just 81 days we have integrated light rail into the MyZone ticketing system. This means that commuters, families and pensioners all will be able to use MyZone tickets on light rail. But guess what? The Labor side of politics said it could not happen. When the Leader of the Opposition was Minister for Transport he refused to integrate light rail into the MyZone ticketing system. He said it could not be done. But now that he is the Leader of the Opposition, he has developed a new interest in the project. Just last month he posted several questions on the notice paper asking about the status of the project, what it would cost, and what is the time line for implementation.

Mr Richard Amery: Why don't you answer it?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I will give the answer. I am happy to tell the Leader of the Opposition that the project is complete. It has been done—in fewer than 100 days. What they could not do in 16 years, what he could not do when he was public transport Minister, we have already done. It will start on Monday at minimal cost to the taxpayer. We will deliver great benefits to commuters, families and pensioners. Labor's incompetence on light rail does not end there. On 9 May the member for Marrickville wrote a letter to me urging for the expansion of the inner-west light rail project. She could not deliver that as Deputy Premier. She failed to make the project happen, yet as soon as we were elected she was quick with the pen to ask us to deliver it.

We will deliver what she failed to do when she was Deputy Premier because we care about public transport. After that side of the House said that it could not integrate light rail into MyZone ticketing we have already done that—tick. We extended it to pensioners—tick. We are building the inner west light rail project—tick. Nothing was achieved by that side of the House. I have the letter to prove it. There was no action from Labor after 16 years, yet we have managed to deliver all this within the first 100 days. Now I turn to the North West Rail Link project and compare what we have done with what those on that side of the House did. I know time is short here, but since 13 May we have issued the eleventh and twelfth tenders for key parts of this project.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will come to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: In regard to the South West Rail Link, the member for Barcelona—I mean the member for Heffron—bragged that one million hours of work had been done on the project. But in that time not one sleeper was laid. We have already managed to start laying track on that important project. I have been out there with my colleagues from the south-west. [*Time expired.*]

DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES BUDGET

Mrs BARBARA PERRY: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Family and Community Services. Given the Minister's statement in the *Sydney Morning Herald* that the Expenditure Review Committee determines her budget, and given that she attended an Expenditure Review Committee meeting on Tuesday at 5.30 p.m., can the Minister confirm that the community services budget will be cut by around 2.5 per cent?

Ms PRU GOWARD: I thank the member for her question. I will not confirm that we will make the same mess of this as those opposite did. I will confirm that we no longer will pretend that the last 16 years did not exist. The failure of those opposite to bring budgets in on time ended with this State being in a horrendous situation, particularly for family and community services. Labor knew months ago what was happening in the family and community services budget. The former Minister knows because the same officials who were telling her were telling me. We on our side of Parliament know that she knew; she just walked away, put her head in the sand and let the train wreck come. We are not going to cut front-line workers because improving services, which is the O'Farrell-Stoner Government cornerstone, will mean supporting them more. From the Treasurer and the Premier we all know about the \$5.2 billion black hole we are facing and we now know, of course, about the huge mess in family and community services.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will listen to the answer in silence.

Ms PRU GOWARD: Because they asked for it. We heard the shadow Minister for Community Services, Barbara Perry, on radio this morning. Did she say that \$1.3 billion is the result of 16 years of mismanagement?

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Canterbury to order.

Ms PRU GOWARD: That is why they were kicked out on 26 March.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the Leader of the Opposition to order. I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the second time. The member for Auburn will come to order.

Ms PRU GOWARD: She said, "I think the maths is really simple here."

The SPEAKER: The member for Auburn will come to order.

Ms PRU GOWARD: The shadow Minister is absolutely right. The maths is very simple: 5 per cent in funding growth and 9 per cent in expenditure growth—

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Maroubra to order.

Ms PRU GOWARD: —which means there is a huge budget hole that just keeps growing until real reforms are made. That is what those opposite did not have the ticker for: they left us with the problem of making the real reforms. They put out their hands at the Wood royal commission for money and did not address the long-term reforms that were necessary over 16 years. New South Wales now has the shameful statistic of one in 100 children being in out-of-home care, that is, 17,000 children, and we rank number one in the country for it.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Canterbury to order for the second time.

Ms PRU GOWARD: Labor failed to transfer out-of-home care.

The SPEAKER: Opposition members will come to order. I call the member for Marrickville to order.

Ms PRU GOWARD: Labor failed to integrate services for families. It failed to be accountable and transparent about its failures. It failed to keep its budget under control. It knew that it was heading for a train wreck. It knows that \$1.3 billion in 2014 is the recipe for a disaster for children and it puts them at risk.

The SPEAKER: The member for Auburn will come to order.

Ms PRU GOWARD: That is why we were elected to fix it. After all that failure Labor then decided to promote the chief architect of that failure to be deputy Opposition leader. Improving services and increasing accountability and transparency when we have—

The SPEAKER: The member for Auburn will come to order.

Ms PRU GOWARD: Improving services for children and vulnerable people in this State will mean working better and smarter. It will be even harder thanks to the mismanagement of the budget. It will take medium-term reform—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

Ms PRU GOWARD: They did not have an idea. They just let it keep growing to the point where we have a \$1.3 billion hole that is our job to repair because they walked away from the children and the vulnerable families of this State.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

BUDGET BLACK HOLE

Mr BRYAN DOYLE: My question is directed to the Minister for Resources and Energy, and Special Minister of State. Can the Minister advise the House of contributing factors to Labor's \$5.2 billion budget black hole?

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: I thank the member for Campbelltown not just for a 22 per cent swing but for the fact that he and the member for Dubbo are two outstanding police officers in this Parliament, unlike the member for Mount Druitt, who gave his police service to New South Wales in the last century. When we look at the \$5.2 billion deficit—

The SPEAKER: Order! All members will come to order.

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: —black hole, we look across the other side—

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Mount Druitt to order.

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: —and think: Who would you wish to attribute or pay compliment to for contributing to that \$5.2 billion? I have spoken about the member for Mount Druitt, so let me now look at the member for Cabramatta. He is famous for a number of things. He is famous for the most grubby campaign of 2011, but we will not go into that today.

The SPEAKER: The member for Cabramatta will come to order.

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: We will talk about—

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Cabramatta to order.

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: He received a call offering him \$6.5 million for a car park.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: The question was about a non-existent budget black hole.

The SPEAKER: That is not true.

Mr Michael Daley: That is not true?

The SPEAKER: The question did not include the words "non-existent". What is the member's point of order?

Mr Michael Daley: The point of order is that the Minister, by his own admission, has notified us that he is about to launch into a personal attack on the member for Cabramatta.

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order.

Mr Michael Daley: Number one: it is irrelevant.

The SPEAKER: I have ruled that I uphold the point of order.

Mr Michael Daley: And number two: it breaches Standing Order 73.

The SPEAKER: I have ruled that I uphold the point of order. The member will resume his seat. The Minister will return to the leave of the question. If the Minister wishes to make personal attacks on other members he should do so by way of substantive motion.

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: Move over, Robbo, he's getting ready. The member for Cabramatta gets a phone call offering \$6.5 million.

Dr Andrew McDonald: Point of order:

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: There is no reflection on the member for Cabramatta—yet. "Here is \$6.5 million. You can have a car park." One side of Cabramatta railway station has 700 shops; the other side has 40 shops.

Mr Barry O'Farrell: Where did they put it?

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: They put it on the side with 40 shops.

The SPEAKER: Order! I cannot hear the Minister. The Minister will return to the leave of the question.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: You just ruled with respect to Standing Order 73.

The SPEAKER: Order! That is correct.

Mr Michael Daley: The Minister is completely ignoring your ruling.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will return to the leave of the question relating to the budget black hole.

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: This is the contribution to the black hole, if the Speaker will hear me out.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will answer the question.

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: There are a couple of points about the difference between 700 and 40. Property on the side with 40 shops was owned by a certain property developer, Mr Medich.

Dr Andrew McDonald: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I know the point of order the member is going to raise.

Dr Andrew McDonald: This is clearly unacceptable. I ask you to sit the Minister down. He is making no effort to answer the question and is canvassing your ruling for the third time.

The SPEAKER: Order! I will sit the Minister down if he does not return to the leave of the question.

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: I will. The black hole of \$5.2 billion has many contributors. If the member for Cabramatta is so sensitive I will not go further on that. At 6.00 p.m. on 26 March on ABC television—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Cabramatta will come to order.

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: At 6.00 p.m. on 26 March on ABC television, when the polling booths closed—

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I have just ruled on a point of order. The Minister has only just resumed his answer. If this is the same point of order I will stop the clock.

Ms Linda Burney: The Minister needs to stop trying to be funny and answer the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Canterbury will resume her seat. The Minister has mentioned the budget black hole. I am sure he will return to the leave of the question.

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: When we come back in August I will talk about the member for Canterbury.

[Time expired.]

Mr BRYAN DOYLE: I seek leave for the Minister to be granted an extension of time.

The SPEAKER: Order! By leave the Minister is granted an extension of time of two minutes to provide additional information.

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: I know how much you enjoyed that. On one side of Cabramatta station there are 700 shops; on the other side there are 40 shops. Mr Medich owns property on the side with 40 shops, and the member for Cabramatta made sure it was there. This is the man who, after the grubbiest campaign of 2011, went on ABC television at 6.00 p.m. on 26 March to say this.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I know what the member's point of order will be.

Mr Michael Daley: The behaviour—

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will come to order. The member for Cabramatta will come to order.

Mr Michael Daley: The standing orders apply equally, regardless of what day of the year the Parliament is sitting. Clearly, the Minister's behaviour is unacceptable. This is the fourth occasion on which the Minister has ignored your ruling. I ask you to bring him to order.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will return to the leave of the question.

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: I quote: "In politics you give no quarter and in politics you take no quarter". The member for Cabramatta will have to live by those words for the next four years. After that he promised a \$34 million car park to salve the demands of the people of Cabramatta.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: I raise the same point of order, and I will keep doing it all day in light of your previous five rulings.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has five seconds to complete his answer. The Minister will resume his seat.

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: To be continued.

INDIGENOUS IMPRISONMENT

Mr JAMIE PARKER: I direct my question to the Attorney General. I refer to the Federal Parliament's "Doing Time" report released this week, which found that there was a 57 per cent increase in Indigenous imprisonment rates in New South Wales between 2000 and 2009, and the Attorney General's statement that the Government is seeking to reduce crime and incarceration rates. What specific initiatives will the Government implement to reduce the massive overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in the New South Wales prison system?

Mr GREG SMITH: I thank the member for Balmain for his sensible interest in the tragic situation that applies in this country. The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders report contains some terrible things. The report notes that in the last financial year the proportion of young people in detention in New South Wales of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background is 49.8 per cent—a figure which I am sure all members agree is far too high, given that Indigenous young people aged 10 to 18 make up only 3 per cent of the New South Wales population. The Government agrees with the comments made by the Commonwealth Attorney General, Robert McClelland, that governments of all persuasions, both State and Federal, need to renew and redouble their efforts to turn around these alarming statistics.

Nevertheless, I was encouraged by some aspects noted in the report, particularly in relation to improving the interaction between police and Aboriginal youth. The report told of our police force in Redfern, where, according to the report, the number of Aboriginal youths committing robberies reduced by 80 per cent in one year. The report noted that the Redfern Local Area Commander, Superintendent Luke Freudenstein, put this success down to the interaction he had with the Aboriginal leaders on a daily basis and the forums and programs they had been running in unison. This is an example of where good policy and goodwill can lead to good outcomes. The Government and I are committed to better outcomes, particularly in closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous disadvantage.

The Government intends to introduce a number of initiatives that are directed at reducing the State's jail population, which will also assist Aboriginals. These initiatives include the establishment of a second Drug Court in Sydney. That facility will provide detoxification services and drug testing, monitoring and treatment. The Government will also establish a large acute drug treatment facility to deal with drug users already in the prison system. That program will involve voluntary participation in intense treatment. In addition, when addicts leave prison they will be followed up by both government and non-government agencies that will provide assistance in dealing with drug addiction. Unfortunately, many Aboriginal prisoners have drugs problems—not only alcohol but also heroin problems.

Research indicates that numerous factors contribute to recidivism, including mental health problems, drug and alcohol addiction, poor literacy and low levels of education and vocational training. What did we get from Labor in 16 years? A lot of people are colder and deeper in debt—St Peter, don't you call me 'cause I can't go, I owe my soul to the Sussex Street show. One glaring problem of Labor's 16 years in office was its failure to reduce reoffending significantly, thus exposing the community to crimes committed by offenders who had not been rehabilitated. Criminals with a history of drug addiction are a particular issue. Unless their addiction is addressed in prison they are likely to reoffend when they are released because that is all they know. The previous Government's approach was to fill prisoners with methadone and lock them in their cells.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

Mr GREG SMITH: That negated any interest that they might have had in further education. It has led to a decline in the participation of prisoners in education programs from about 60 per cent 10 years ago to about 32 per cent now—an absolute disgrace. What did the then Government do about it? It did nothing. That is why this Government will spend more money on education and other strategies in the prison and juvenile justice system. It wants to tackle this problem because the community as well as the Indigenous community—all of us—will reap the rewards. This Government wants to get into the hearts and minds of criminals, particularly young criminals, and turn them away from a life of crime, not just use statistics to beat the law and order drum. Members opposite should be careful or I will bring Senator Steve Hutchins here to tell us more about it. If we can divert young people from crime the community will benefit.

GOVERNMENT LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY: My question is directed to the Premier. What action has the Government taken during the current session of Parliament to clean up the mess left by the previous Labor Government?

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I thank the member for Riverstone for his question and I hope, Madam Speaker, you do not get a request for an extension of time for this answer. At the start of this parliamentary session we were all promised that we would see the most energetic and constructive performance of all time. Do members remember that? As it turns out we did get it, not from the Leader of the Opposition who promised it but from the Liberal-Nationals Government. I am delighted that, as of today, 27 pieces of legislation have passed through this Parliament in just 24 days. A further seven bills have been introduced as part of the reform agenda that this Government is pursuing. Never has a government hit the ground running so hard to try to get this State back into shape. That is necessary because of the enormous mess left to us by those opposite, including the member for Marrickville and the member for Canterbury in the Community Services area in particular.

We have introduced some of the most crucial reforms this State has seen in decades. I am amazed that the member for Canterbury and the member for Marrickville would ever talk about the Department of Community Services. They campaigned on spending \$1.2 billion in the lead-up to the 2007 election and it was simply a slogan. As Commissioner Wood found in the special commission of inquiry, the place was a mess and more children died after having been notified to the Department of Community Services than in any other State over those 16 years. That is their record and I will hang it around their necks every day. Our reforms include the scrapping of Labor's corrupt and disgraceful part 3A planning laws.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Auburn will come to order.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: Our reforms involve cleaning up the lobbying industry and banning success fees; overhauling the State's occupational health and safety laws; introducing payroll tax rebates as part of our Jobs Action Plan; setting up Infrastructure NSW to deal with the disgraceful backlog in infrastructure—road, rail, hospitals, schools and ports—left to us by those opposite. Our industrial relations and public service reforms will help get this State's finances back on track. While I am at it, I noticed yesterday that not only have Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania pursued a 2.5 per cent wages policy for public servants but Tasmania has also joined with the New South Wales Government in ensuring there is an end to no forced redundancy. In that State, as in this State from yesterday, public servants who do not have jobs will have a certain amount of time to find themselves a job within the public service or the private sector or else, as in New South Wales, they will be forcibly made redundant. It is a bipartisan policy supported by Labor governments and Liberal governments because we understand that in life no-one gets a free ride.

We have given our police move-on powers so that law-abiding citizens do not have to put up with drunken louts who think it is acceptable to go out on a Friday, Saturday or other night, drink themselves stupid and attack and assault other people. We have introduced life sentences for anybody who murders police, because of the job they do for our communities. We have provided people with a financial incentive to relocate to regional New South Wales. The list goes on and we already have other legislation in this place awaiting approval including the three strikes system for pubs and clubs, the establishment of Restart NSW, strengthening the powers of the Independent Commission Against Corruption, and strengthening whistleblower laws across the State. Whilst the Government's performance has exceeded all expectations, the performance of those opposite has been pretty ordinary and pretty dismal, to say the least.

There is no bigger problem facing this State than that of transport: roads, rail, people getting to and from work, businesses trying to get their products across the city and people trying to travel from the country to

the city and vice versa. Given that is the single biggest issue that faces this State you would imagine we would have had question after question from those opposite about that in the 24 sitting days. The Minister for Transport should be out on her feet, exhausted from having come into this place to be asked question after question by those opposite. But how many questions have they asked on transport? Have they asked all 97 questions they have had the opportunity to ask plus today's questions? No. They have asked one question on transport in 24 sitting days. They have learnt nothing from their election defeat. People across this State tried to wake up a government that had dozed off and was asleep at the wheel and had done damage to this State, but after that car crash—after that resounding defeat—they still have not woken up to the lessons and worked out why they are sitting on that side in such small numbers.

Question time concluded at 3.05 p.m.

MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Personal Explanation

Mr DONALD PAGE, by leave: Earlier in question time the Leader of the Opposition sought to impugn my reputation by referring to an Independent Commission Against Corruption report published more than 20 years ago. About 21 years ago there was an inquiry into North Coast land matters and four members of Parliament, including me, were mentioned in the Independent Commission Against Corruption report. Importantly, those matters were thoroughly investigated by the Director of Public Prosecutions, who found that I had acted in an appropriate way as a local member and that I had no case to answer. If members had any doubt about the fact that the Leader of the Opposition is a grub they need no further evidence.

MEMBER FOR KOGARAH

Personal Explanation

Ms CHERIE BURTON, by leave: Earlier in question time the Premier, not for the first time, impugned my reputation—

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will listen to the member's personal explanation in silence.

Ms CHERIE BURTON: —in relation to a driving matter involving—

Mr Barry O'Farrell: Two driving matters.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Ms CHERIE BURTON: One is a Ray Hadley assertion. It was in relation to a driving matter involving me over a year ago. I want to correct the record. I assisted police at all times and at no time—

Mr Barry O'Farrell: This is the fourth explanation of this and they change every time.

Ms CHERIE BURTON: We just heard the previous personal explanation in silence. I expect the same respect.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will listen to the member for Kogarah in silence.

Ms CHERIE BURTON: At no time had I refused a request or a direction from police. The courts have determined my punishment in the same way that they would have for any other motorist, as was in this place by the member for Londonderry.

TALENT DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Ministerial Statement

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI (Murrumbidgee—Minister for Education) [3.07 p.m.]: It is with pleasure that I acknowledge and congratulate Trevor Ashley, who is the lead in the musical *Hairspray*, which opens tonight in Sydney, and who is a graduate of the Talent Development Project in New South Wales. The Talent

Development Project is Australia's most successful music industry training program and has operated for 20 years. It is the only program in Australia that is free and solely directed towards public school students. It prepares these fine young performers from New South Wales public schools for careers in this highly competitive industry. The Talent Development Project and its brilliant staff help the young students develop their entertainment skills and provide them with the opportunity to network with others in the industry.

The Talent Development Project is largely funded by the Department of Education and Communities and also receives support from other organisations such as the Sydney Entertainment Centre, Clubs NSW, Club Keno, Sony Foundation Australia, Sony Music, the Australasian Performing Right Association and Radio 2GB. On behalf of the New South Wales Parliament I take this opportunity to congratulate and thank those supporters of the Talent Development Project. The Talent Development Project has a strong history of discovering and nurturing the talents of Indigenous students. It also has a particular emphasis on rural and regional New South Wales public school students and on Western Sydney, which I particularly commend it for. Workshop programs have been conducted in Tamworth, Moruya, Bourke, Dubbo, Mount Druitt, Wagga Wagga, Lismore and Coonabarabran.

Graduates from the Talent Development Project have been very successful in their chosen careers, and New South Wales should be proud of this program that has put our performers on the world stage. The Talent Development Project has an esteemed list of graduates including: Golden Guitar winner the McClymonts; renowned musical director John Foreman; and Australian Idol contestant Paulini. As I said, the lead actor in *Hairspray*, Trevor Ashley, is a recent graduate from Talent Development Project. *Hairspray* opens tonight at the Lyric Theatre at Star City. Trevor honed his impressive cabaret skills at the Talent Development Project. Trevor has written, produced, directed and starred in countless musicals and cabarets such as *Priscilla Queen of the Desert*, *Jerry Springer: the Opera*, *I'm Every Woman* and *Showqueen*.

Trevor received the honour award for 2010 for his work, and was also named one of the 25 most influential gay and lesbian Australians. He is one of Sydney's best drag performers, and has an incredible ability to hear a piece of music and play it back immediately. The Talent Development Project should be congratulated on its well-designed and successful program for students. I wish Talent Development Project well for its twentieth anniversary concert on 23 August at the Entertainment Centre and urge all members to attend. I am sure all members agree that nurturing and supporting our young performers in New South Wales government schools should be continued. On behalf of the New South Wales Government I wish Trevor Ashley well tonight in his role as Edna Turnblad in *Hairspray*.

Ms CARMEL TEBBUTT (Marrickville) [3.11 p.m.]: I support the Minister and congratulate the Talent Development Program on its twentieth anniversary and pay tribute to its substantial achievements. I particularly congratulate Trevor Ashley on his success and his role in *Hairspray*. The Talent Development Program grew out of the Schools Spectacular, that wonderful annual event that showcases the talents of students in New South Wales public schools. The program identifies talented students who show a real interest in making popular entertainment a career. It provides students with a network of contacts in the entertainment industry. It gives young people who have the drive and talent, skills and knowledge to help them succeed in the often cutthroat world of entertainment.

In this day of *Australian Idol* and *You've got Talent* it may not seem so exceptional but the program long predates those programs. Importantly, it encourages students to compose their own original works. When it was first set-up it was truly groundbreaking. It is impossible not to talk about Mary Lopez, the original artistic director of the Talent Development Project. Mary developed the teaching program for the Talent Development Program and uses her vast network of contacts within the entertainment industry to constantly review the program. Mary Lopez was the director of every Schools Spectacular from its launch in 1984 until she retired in 2008 and she remains involved with it. The Talent Development Program is supported by some very eminent people, including its patrons Margaret Whitlam and Kevin Jacobsen, the board chair Matthew Macdougall, and board members such as the broadcaster Alan Jones who are all very passionate about the program.

Most importantly, the Talent Development Program works. If we look at the list of graduates, it is like the Who's Who of the Australian entertainment industry. As the Minister said, it includes the McClymonts, Human Nature, Nathan Foley, Angus and Julia Stone, Trevor Ashley and Julie Goodwin. Hearing their child say they want to pursue a career in the entertainment industry no doubt brings about a sense of apprehension, if not impending doom, for so many parents. But thanks to the Talent Development Program children from across New South Wales, irrespective of their background, have been able to pursue their dreams and make a success

of their chosen career in the entertainment industry. It is a great tribute to the strength of our public education system and the wonderful people within it that this program has been as successful as it has. I wish it all the best for the future. I wish Trevor Ashley the best for his performance.

STATUTE LAW (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL 2011

Message received from the Legislative Council returning the bill with amendments.

Consideration in Detail

Consideration of the Legislative Council amendments.

Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 22 June 2011

No. 1 Pages 7 and 8, schedule 1 [6], line 1 on page 7 to line 33 on page 8. Omit all words on those lines.

No. 2 Pages 15 to 17, schedule 1 [12], line 25 on page 15 to line 16 on page 17. Omit all words on those lines.

No. 3 Pages 47 to 51, schedule 3 [8], line 1 on page 47 to line 28 on page 51. Omit all words on those lines.

Motion by Mr Brad Hazzard, on behalf of Mr Barry O'Farrell, agreed to:

That the House agree to the Legislative Council amendments.

Legislative Council amendments agreed to.

Message sent to the Legislative Council advising it of the resolution.

PETITIONS

The Clerk announced that the following petitions signed by fewer than 500 persons were lodged for presentation:

Oxford Street Traffic Arrangements

Petition requesting the removal of the clearway and introduction of a 40 kilometres per hour speed limit in Oxford Street, received from **Ms Clover Moore**.

Greendale Planning

Petition requesting the overturning of the joint regional planning panel decision regarding DA-1291/2010 and the suspension of any government decisions regarding cemeteries, crematoria and places of worship in Greendale, received from **Mrs Tanya Davies**.

Pet Shops

Petition opposing the sale of animals in pet shops, received from **Ms Clover Moore**.

Mental Health Services

Petition requesting increased funding for mental health services, received from **Ms Clover Moore**.

PETITIONS

The Clerk announced that the following petition signed by more than 500 persons was lodged for presentation:

Bus Service 268

Petition requesting an increase in the number of buses travelling on route 268 to the previous hourly frequency, received from **Mr Clayton Barr**.

PARLIAMENTARY STAFF PERFORMANCE

The SPEAKER: Order! On behalf of all members I thank all staff who have been involved in the transition of all new members to the Parliament this year. It has been an enormous task and I cannot name

everybody. The task has involved moving old members to new offices and new members to new offices. It has been an immense job for those in information technology and catering, everyone dealing with new members, everyone at front of House and everybody behind the scenes who make this Parliament work. I hope that all members realise what an enormous task the staff in this place have and do not take them for granted. This afternoon I hope they find a staff member and say, "Thank you for what you have done for me." I thank the Clerks for their assistance. I thank also the Serjeant-at-Arms and the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms for their advice—some of which I have taken and some I have not—mostly I have taken it because it has been wise advice.

I thank everybody involved in Hansard, who probably have the most difficult task of all. It has been an enormous task with so many new members. I also thank my staff, Luke—I have only one staff member at the moment when there should be three—and Joe. Everybody knows Joe. He does an enormous job. Both of my staff have worked so hard under very difficult circumstances. We are fairly short staffed. I also thank young Jeremy who has been working at the front counter. It is Jeremy's last day either today or next week. I am sure members have met Jeremy and noted that he has treated all of us with the utmost courtesy and good manners. I wish him all the best. I hope to see him back at some future date. I thank all of the staff. Let us all remember that we are not the most important people in this place. The staff run this place and they do a damn good job. Thank you very much and have a good break.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) noted.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

KIAMA BENDS

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) [3.24 p.m.]: This afternoon I wish to speak on an issue of great concern to many members in my electorate: the Kiama bends. For those who are not familiar with the bends, they are a section of the infamous Princes Highway that causes locals grave concerns following accidents and serious injuries and deaths on that section of road. Madam Speaker, I commend your effort as the member for South Coast in drawing to the attention of the House your concerns about the state of that section of road, and ensuring that the Government has at the forefront of its mind a much-needed upgrade. This issue has plagued governments of all persuasions for many, many years. For those of us who have to live with it, it continues to be far, far worse. In reflecting on the bends today I think of some of the lives that have been lost, particularly the young lives tragically ended on this section of the Princes Highway.

I think of Megan Dalley, a 19-year-old driver who in November 2007 lost her life on the Kiama bends. In almost the same location, Jason Tysar, aged 25, lost control of his vehicle while travelling south on the Kiama bends. Those young lives were tragically lost on a local road known to them, but a road that continues to be known to all of us as tragic and certainly in need of attention. During the election a candidates forum was held in Gerringong. I commend the candidates who attended the discussion on the Kiama bends. Adrian Daley, an Independent candidate from Albion Park; Sandra McCarthy, the mayor of Kiama and an Independent candidate; Ben van der Wijngaart, The Greens candidate and deputy mayor of Kiama; as well as my friend and former colleague Matt Brown and I, as the Liberal candidate for Kiama, attended the meeting to discuss the community's concerns about the Kiama bends.

More than 250 people at the meeting strongly expressed their frustration that nothing seemed to happen and that something needed to be done. Throughout the election campaign I heard the call and lobbied very hard the then shadow Minister for Roads, Andrew Stoner. I was able to take to that meeting a commitment from the Coalition that we would provide flashing speed indicator signs, so that motorists would know how fast they are travelling and how fast they should be going. I really appreciated all of the comments and contributions that were made by candidates at that meeting. They were genuine in their concern for the community, a concern which we all shared. Emanating from that meeting's south precinct committee, which

had called the meeting, was a resolution. I commend the work of Darrel Clingan, its chairman, in calling the meeting and ensuring a great deal of follow-up with all candidates to ensure there was an outcome. The resolution was:

We call on the successful candidate for the seat of Kiama to ensure that the RTA takes urgent action to reduce the risks to motorists using the Kiama Bends in their present form by:

1. Reducing the speed limit to 70 km/h
2. Moving the current southbound merge point northwards to a point near the truck rest area
3. Installing two mobile speed-detecting variable message signs, and
4. Extending the southbound end of the existing Jersey barrier with a cable barrier.

And further, that they commit to ensuring the RTA immediately starts planning an overall upgrade to the Kiama Bends as a permanent solution.

That was proposed by Peter Hainsworth and seconded by Wayne Wells. The motion was carried unanimously. Since then I have had a number of representations from Mr Clingan and from Mr Wells and from the Gerringong community, and in particular from Kiama council, expressing concerns about this particular section of road and the fact that government needs to do something. I commend the fact that the Minister has committed to follow through with the commitment made in opposition. Duncan Gay will soon visit the Kiama electorate, and he will visit the subject area, where he will talk with community members about how more can be done. I will be an advocate for my community on this very important issue. I do not want to have to get up in the House and read onto the record the names of people who have tragically lost their lives. I want to be an advocate for people that want to see an improvement to the Kiama bends.

The community is asking for somebody to stand up, and I want to be that person, so that we have safer roads in local communities. This Government has committed to improving the Princes Highway, and I commend Barry O'Farrell for announcing half a billion dollars to ensure an upgrade of the Princes Highway. However, the Kiama bends cannot be forgotten as part of this process. Too many young lives have been lost on those roads, and country members in particular would know the feeling of attending those sad and tragic events, and the funerals that follow, and trying to comfort the families of those who have lost their lives. I want to ensure that I do everything I can in this place to be a voice for those families, and also a voice for my community, so that we never see tragic losses of lives, particularly on this very dangerous section of the Princes Highway in the Kiama electorate.

BLACKTOWN HOSPITAL REDEVELOPMENT

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown—Leader of the Opposition) [3.29 p.m.]: The redevelopment of Blacktown Hospital is an issue of great concern to the people of Blacktown. The redevelopment of Blacktown Hospital is regularly raised with me by members of my electorate, particularly carers, young families and the elderly. Each year, Blacktown Hospital treats more than 35,000 people in the emergency department. It has approximately 24,500 patients stay at least one night in hospital and it performs 8,000 surgical procedures. The hospital provides 214,000 outpatient services and assists with the birth of more than 3,300 babies.

Blacktown Hospital was opened in April 1965, with a total of 160 beds. Its bed capacity increased over the years, with the maternity unit commissioned in 1976. By 1987 its bed capacity had reached 365. The hospital was the subject of a \$90 million capital redevelopment, with the new hospital being commissioned in 2000. As the population of Blacktown and western Sydney grows, the demands on Blacktown Hospital grow as well. Blacktown Hospital requires significant redevelopment and growth to meet the needs of the people in western Sydney. Despite this pressing need, the new Government has withdrawn funding for the redevelopment of Blacktown Hospital.

The Department of Health had signed off on the redevelopment of Blacktown Hospital prior to the election, with the former Labor Government committing \$245 million to the redevelopment of Blacktown and Mount Druitt hospitals in an agreement made before the election. It is worrying that the Government has promised only \$125 million for the upgrade of Blacktown Hospital. What is more, as yet no agreement has been signed. My constituents are justifiably worried that the Government's proposed redevelopment will not meet the needs of the local community and may never eventuate. Prior to the election Labor committed to supplying Blacktown Hospital with over 120 new beds, an expanded emergency department and a new and much-needed cancer care centre. The Government has yet to commit to these improvements. Blacktown is the largest local

government area in New South Wales. Ours is a large and varied community with specific needs. In particular, Blacktown residents suffer from among the highest cancer rates in New South Wales. We need improved radiology services. I implore the Government to consider the needs of our community.

This situation has only been further exacerbated by the O'Farrell Government's wages policy. We are facing a global shortage of nurses and any increase in the pressure these nurses face will only lead to a higher attrition rate. Any resulting reduction in nurses at Blacktown Hospital will place further strain on the already overworked staff at the hospital and put the Blacktown community at risk. I raise the concerns of one constituent in particular, Mrs Donna Jabir, who is most concerned about the state of Blacktown Hospital. Mrs Jabir's mother, Phyllis Bowden, a local Aboriginal Elder, died at Blacktown Hospital on the 6 February 2011 of aspiration pneumonia. Mrs Jabir feels that Blacktown Hospital was not properly resourced to provide the support her mother required and this factor contributed to her death. I have met with Mrs Jabir and her husband in my office and I can tell the House firsthand that Mrs Jabir is quite distraught about what happened to her mother.

I hope that the Minister will take a personal interest in Mrs Jabir's complaint to the Health Care Complaints Commission and that this will help demonstrate to Minister Skinner the urgent need for the upgrade to Blacktown Hospital. People in Blacktown do not ask for much, but, as I have said previously in this House, they are certainly not afraid to speak their minds when the situation calls for it. They just want to see the area improved and they expect the provision of access to health services to which every resident in New South Wales is entitled. I am grateful for the opportunity to raise this matter in the House today and I hope that the Minister will commit to fully funding the upgrade to Blacktown Hospital as quickly as possible.

RURAL CRIME

Mr STEVE CANSDELL (Clarence—Parliamentary Secretary) [3.34 p.m.]: I wish to talk about a committee that was re-formed on Tuesday 21 June. My role as Parliamentary Secretary for Police has led to my appointment as chair of that advisory group. The group has been running for about 10 years, but I am informed that it has achieved zero—nothing in 10 years of Labor Government. It is a group where people sat down and warmed seats. I am proud to say that the group now comprises real people, including a rural crime investigator, Inspector Greg Stier from Inverell or somewhere in the Tablelands, who has come to the group with real input, and Superintendent Bruce Lyons. They both have major experience in regional and rural crime. They will have great input and push for change and for real action from this Government in assisting rural crime investigators.

The group also includes Les Tree, the Chief Executive Officer, Ministry for Police and Emergency Services, and Acting Commander Geoffrey McKechnie, New South Wales Police Force corporate spokesperson for rural crime, who participated in the meeting via teleconference. I am glad to have Troy Grant, the member for Dubbo, in the group. He is a former inspector of police and a man who has spent much of his time in rural New South Wales. He had great impact on rural policing in areas that needed someone with gusto who was prepared to make a difference. Thomas George, the Deputy-Speaker and member for Lismore, was also at the meeting. As a former stock and station agent, he knows a fair bit about stock theft and the major problems that people in rural New South Wales face. He is happy to have real input and, like all other members of the committee, see real change and positive outcomes for the people of New South Wales, especially rural people.

The group talked about issues that really matter. We need to challenge issues such as stock theft and illegal hunting in State forests and on private property without the permission of the landholders. We need to give our rural crime investigators the support they need and quarantine them from doing general crime investigation in the country when other general crime investigators are busy or need help. What came out of the committee meeting is that, first, we need to make sure that there are adequate police numbers in the crime investigation commands in country and regional New South Wales so that rural crime investigators can spend their time investigating rural crime.

Unfortunately, when people on the land see strange lights at night or suspicious truck movements, they do not report it to police. They have found there is no point as the rural crime investigators are away from the area or on general duties, not doing the job they are supposed to do in country New South Wales. Rural crime investigators were appointed to investigate rural crime, but that is not happening. It is a specialised area of policing that requires special training so that they understand stock. They need that knowledge to fulfil their duties. We talked about ensuring that there are enough police. The Minister for Police, Michael Gallacher, has commissioned Peter Parsons, the former deputy commissioner, to conduct an audit of every police station for a complete review.

Mr Ryan Park: A good man.

Mr STEVE CANSDELL: That is right, he is a good man—it is good to hear that come from the Opposition through the member for Keira. Peter Parsons is a man who understands rural policing in New South Wales because he has been a country co. I believe he will deliver a review that will take into account the rural and regional policing needs that have been ignored for too long—for at least the past 16 years. I look forward to his report and to the committee's recommendation to government to provide better policing in rural and regional New South Wales.

TRIBUTE TO KATHLEEN BOWMAN

Mrs BARBARA PERRY (Auburn) [3.38 p.m.]: I speak in honour of the late Kathleen Bowman, who passed away at Bankstown City Aged Care Trust Home on 26 May. Kath was deeply cherished not only by her family and loved ones but also by the community of Bankstown and the Australian Labor Party, to whom she made enormous contributions. Kath was born on 14 June 1923 in Guyra and lived her earlier years with three brothers and three sisters in the New England region towns of Walcha and Werris Creek, Tamworth. Kath's father was a watchmaker who worked hard to provide for his family through the turbulent years of the Great Depression and World War II that followed. In 1946 Kath found true love and an invaluable partner in Roger Bowman, who became her husband, dearest friend and lifelong professional companion with whom she shared everything.

In 1948 Roger and Kath moved to a house in Sefton, which is my electorate, where they laid down their roots. Kath remained in that same house until she was moved to Chester Hill Village four years ago. In 1951 she commenced a life of tremendous activity and service to the community by founding the Mother's Club at Immaculate Heart of Mary Primary School, Sefton. Monthly meetings were held in her house. Kath and Roger made a further invaluable contribution to the schools in Sefton when Roger acted as the first president, and Kath, the first treasurer, of the parents and citizens association at Sefton High School when it opened in 1961. From 1977 to 1987 Kath was elected as alderman to the Bankstown City Council and in 1990 acted as the Deputy Mayor. Kath and Roger were the first ever husband and wife team to be elected to council, and Kath was the first lady mayoress who was also a councillor. Her other achievements are too numerous to elaborate upon.

I could not possibly hope to do Kath justice in the little time I have available to speak today, but I wish to refer to a couple of matters that exemplify Kath's contribution to the community. Kath established the Bankstown City Aged Care Trust and acted as its director from 1972 to 2002. Ironically she ended up living in a Bankstown City Aged Care Trust facility. Kath helped to pioneer the Chester Hill Library Women's Centre and for many years served as an invaluable member of the Bankstown City Council traffic committee. Furthermore, she served with distinction on the board of the Handicap Children's Association, the Chester Hill Senior Citizens Centre management committee and also was a director of the Bankstown Frail Aged Trust, patron of Birrong Women's Bowling Club and a torch bearer for the 2000 Paralympics. In recognition of her outstanding contributions, Kath received a Centenary Medal for service to the City of Bankstown in September of 2003.

Having been an active and outstanding member of the Australian Labor Party since 1950, Kath was awarded life membership of the Australian Labor Party and was nominated by Helen Westwood, MLC, in 2008 for a McKell Award, which she received from former Premier Morris Iemma that same year. Kath was a remarkable woman of great courage, inspiration, selfless devotion to others, and a deep and genuine love and concern for the interests of her local community. She served with remarkable distinction. She has entered the pages of history as one of the great pioneering local politicians and community leaders of the Bankstown area and its surrounds. Her achievements are all the more remarkable given the eras in which she lived and served—which were far from conducive to attempts by women to assume places of leadership.

I am honoured today to place Kath's life and legacy on the record. It is an incredible inspiration to all women who aspire to make a difference to local communities—indeed, in any arena of life. Most of all I am pleased to be honouring Kath today for the wonderfully compassionate, loving and beautiful human being that she was. There was not ever a time that Kath was not immaculately dressed with her hair beautifully done. Kath was known not only for her beautiful personality but also for her incredible appearance. I can only think that that is the way Kath went. I offer my sincerest condolences to Kath's three daughters, Robyn, Denise and Carol, her 10 grandchildren, 19 great-grandchildren and all her other loved ones and friends, as well as to her surviving

brother, Father Tony Castelli, who has returned to the family's roots in Werris Creek, Tamworth, to serve as its parish priest, and her surviving sister, Colleen Davies. I reserve the last words about Kath for Brian Stanley Wood, a dear friend of hers, who so well encapsulates the Kath that we all loved:

She was a beautiful person who radiated so much charm and gave and gave and gave again. Heaven is a much richer place for gaining such a precious soul.

ARTS QUICK RESPONSE SCHEME

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH (Coogee) [3.43 p.m.]: Today I recognise the achievements of some of my electorate's professional artists. In the most recent round of funding from the New South Wales Government's Arts Quick Response Scheme, three of my constituents received grants of up to \$8,500 to further their artistic endeavours and to support their professional development as artists. Art and artists are important to the Coogee community. The great Australian impressionists Arthur Streeton, Tom Roberts and Charles Conder are but a few of the artists who have made their way to Coogee Beach to paint. And what a beautiful picture it is to paint, with Wedding Cake Island off the coast and the pristine beach right below our feet.

In 2009, as Mayor of the Randwick City Council, I had the pleasure of unveiling a modern tribute to those artists—a piece of public art that will be appreciated and celebrated by Coogee residents well into the future. The quick response scheme is an excellent initiative. It gives grants of up to \$3,000 for individuals and up to \$10,000 for groups who receive an unexpected invitation to a national or international event. The New South Wales Government is helping our artists to seize opportunities that otherwise would be unavailable to them in the event they cannot afford to attend to showcase their work. We are supporting the development of our artists to make sure they do not miss opportunities to be recognised on the world or national stage.

We are giving them a hand up, not a handout, to ensure their success into the future. I recognise my constituents whose work has got them this far and hopefully whose work will put New South Wales on the world stage. Ali Kennedy-Scott from Bronte has been working on her one-woman play for nearly two years. She received rave reviews from the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, the Adelaide Fringe Festival and the Australian Fringe Showcase. She is now taking *The Day the Sky Turned Black*, which is a play about the effects and aftermath of the Victorian Black Saturday bushfires, to the New York Fringe Festival, which is the largest arts festival in North America where more than 1,000 performances are given over 16 days.

An installation artist who specialises in the meaningful installation and articulation of light, Jonathan Bottrell, is taking his work to the Galerie Mirchandani Steinruecke in Mumbai, which is one of India's internationally renowned galleries. Mr Bottrell describes his art as seeking to "look at big issues in a quiet way" by using fluorescent lights to convey meaning and thought about pressing social issues. As an Aboriginal artist, Mr Bottrell also seeks to highlight Indigenous culture. Through the grant scheme, the New South Wales Government is affording him the opportunity to spread Indigenous culture worldwide. Caroline Craig, who is the third of my constituents to receive government funding, is the director of the Australian premiere of *The Coming World*, a play by Pulitzer Award playwright, Christopher Shinn.

The play is staged by Two Birds One Stone in conjunction with the Darlinghurst Theatre Company—a company that is going from strength to strength in the Sydney Arts Community. What is common to the grant recipients is their appreciation for the grants given to them by this Government. Not only are we ensuring the ability of New South Wales artists to showcase their work when they are given the opportunity but we are also providing encouragement and validation of their work. It is my hope that the grants will continue to provide the arts community in New South Wales with much-needed assistance, and that the grants will inspire our artists to achieve bigger and greater things.

AUSTRALIAN BOCCE CHAMPIONSHIP 2011

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [3.47 p.m.]: Today I draw the attention of the House to the forty-first Australian Bocce Senior Championships at Club Marconi, which was hosted by the New South Wales Bocce Federation on Friday 10 June 2011. It was a great pleasure to attend the event and witness firsthand the enjoyment experienced by many of the participants. I wish to acknowledge the people who made the championships possible. The master of ceremonies was Fortunato "Lucky" Legato. I offer special thanks to the acting chairman of Club Marconi, Mr Vince Foti, the President of Bocce Federation of Australia, Mr Raymond Cher, and the vice-president and sports president of Club Marconi, Mr Mario Soligo. I offer special congratulations to the organising committee, which comprises Joe Rozzo, Penny Visintin, Valerio Chiandotto, Nella Chiandotto and Sue Olsen. I also offer special thanks to Bocce Federation Australia's committee members, Frank Funari, Tony Biancacci and Frank Gazzola.

In the opening ceremony, the State teams marched into the bowls area led by the Liverpool Catholic Club Southern Cross Pipe Band. The Australian national anthem was performed by the Club Marconi choir. The traditional opening of the championship was completed by the bowl-off between special guests. I note the presence in the Chamber of the member for Smithfield, Mr Andrew Rohan, who participated in the traditional bowl-off. Special thanks go to the sponsors: John De Francesco, Divella foods, Tony Fornasier, Len Gulli, Sunnybrook Hotel and Function Centre, and Carlo's Fresh.

The history and evolution of bocce is interesting. As early as 5000 BC the Egyptians played a form of bocce with polished rocks. Whilst throwing balls towards a target is probably the oldest game known to man, bocce today looks quite different. In early times players used coconuts brought in from Africa, and later used hard olive wood to carve out the bocce balls. From Egypt the game made its way to Greece. Around 800 BC the Romans rapidly picked up the influential game, introducing it throughout the Roman Empire. So popular was bocce, its influence rapidly grew across the world and was later condemned by many heads of state as it was believed the game took up too much time. Modern-day bocce is played by throwing a jack and subsequently bowling the bocce ball. The closest ball to the jack after all players have bowled wins the point.

Today Bocce is enjoyed by many Australians and can be played by people of all ages. It is very common to see people playing the game at picnics in my electorate of Fairfield. Many local shops in Fairfield sell bocce sets, which are popularly sold during spring and summer. Bocce has been a part of Fairfield since post-war migration. Migrant families would play the game as a form of relaxation on weekends. Bocce was the inspiration for migrants to come together and socialise in the Fairfield area. Subsequently, due to the hard work and determination of the bocce faithful, Club Marconi boasts the best bocce facility in the country. The forty-first men's and the sixteenth women's championships were held with the support and cooperation of Club Italia—thanks to chairman Serge Laureti.

The Bocce National Championship was first held in 1970. The sport has evolved since then, taking on an international face that promotes the more athletic disciplines of the sport whilst enhancing the skills of the traditional game. Australia has hosted three international world championships and competed in four championships since 1974. The Bocce Federation Australia and the international body are lobbying to include bocce in the Olympic Games. Championship divisions include singles, doubles, triples, fours, the bowl throw, the precision throw, the rapid shuttle throw, the best and fairest and, of course, the champion team. Bocce is the world's oldest sport. Like many other sports it is known to be a beneficial form of exercise, reviving the body and mind. After soccer—or football, as we call it—bocce is among one of the most popular games in the world.

TRIBUTE TO IAN CAMPBELL

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Castle Hill) [3.52 p.m.]: On 3 June 2011 I attended the funeral of Ian Campbell at the Church of Christ the King in North Rocks. Ian Campbell was the former coordinator of the St Vincent de Paul Hills district and introduced me to the society. Ian was a great man and made a significant contribution to The Hills district community. When Ian and his wife, Diane, moved to North Rocks many years ago there was little around—certainly not the school or the church. With their friends, and led by Father Burton, Ian played a major role in establishing the parish of the Church of Christ the King from which the vibrant Catholic community in North Rocks has been built. Ian joined the St Vincent de Paul Society in 1975 when a conference was established in North Rocks. In 1979, four years after joining the society, Ian became the conference leader. For more than 10 years Ian served as St Vincent de Paul emergency services coordinator.

In this role Ian organised the provision of emergency food, utility and rental assistance, and critical referrals to those in need across the Parramatta community. He also served as a member of the Interim Diocesan Council of Parramatta. I met Ian Campbell for the first time in 2010 when he established a new region for St Vincent de Paul known as the Hills region. Ian saw that encouraging younger people to join the society not only would provide a source of energy and enthusiasm to community service in The Hills district but also would provide valuable experiences and, importantly, instil essential virtues and a spirit of service in young people across our community. Whilst I knew Ian for only a relatively short period, I was struck by his determination and zeal to promote young people in the society. He put the wheels in motion to achieve this in the six months he was coordinator of the society prior to being diagnosed with cancer.

Under his leadership he established the inaugural Hills Youth Drug Forum, which was attended by schools throughout the Hills district. The forum featured a panel of speakers, including Ian, the anti-drug

campaigner Tony Wood and journalist Miranda Devine. Local senior students listened and participated in an interactive question and answer forum with the panellists, who had both professional and personal experiences in dealing with the devastating impact of drugs on the community. Ian lived up to his mission. He was a man of uncompromising principle, a man of faith and a man of unstinting devotion in assisting the poor and marginalised in our society. Most importantly, Ian inspired numerous others to follow his example. Through his St Vincent de Paul conference, Ian and the others he led visited the lonely, the sick and those people struggling with addiction or untold trauma. They also assisted countless refugees to escape the horrors of their countries in view of new lives in New South Wales. On 29 May 2011 Ian Campbell passed away. In his eulogy Ian's son David spoke of Ian's death. He said:

As the melanoma spread Dad found himself in severe pain. To see Dad take the fight on was inspirational. He never once complained about his pain—in fact quite often we would have to bring the Doctors up to date as he would leave them convinced he was fine.

At a time when certain groups call for a greater debate around end-of-life procedures rebadged as dying with dignity, Ian Campbell died with true dignity. He died the way in which he lived: with liberality, diligence, patience and sacrifice. His life and his death set an example to those who matter most: his wife, Diane, and his four children. Ian is survived by his wife, his children and children-in-law Karen, David and Margaret, Matthew and Eloise, Michael and Jessica, and his grandchildren Lachlan, Grace, Emily, Sophie, Patrick, Angela, Alexandra, Ainslie and Isaac. I conclude by reading David Campbell's final words in his eulogy to his father:

Dad lived a wonderful life with Mum and shared the love of all his children and grandchildren. He was surrounded by incredible friends and touched many people's lives. He was selfless. He was compassionate. He was strong.

He lived his Faith. He fought the good fight. He is at peace.

TRIBUTE TO JOAN JUDGE

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) [3.57 p.m.]: Today I honour the achievement of Joan Judge, a lady in my electorate, who actually resides in my suburb of east Corrimal and who has contributed 60 years continuous membership of the great Australian Labor Party. At age 87 years that is an honour for anyone in any party. I am sure all members would honour someone who has given a lifetime to a party in whose ideals they believe and whose principles they follow every day. I hope the Australian Labor Party has given her as much joy as she has given it and the people of local community.

Joan Judge is well known in our community for lending a hand. She is the first to put up her hand to help out on election days. She has seen many members pass through this place, local council and Federal Parliament. Someone who has contributed the length of time to a political party as Joan is testament to the sort of people we would all encourage to join our parties. She is a tribute to not only the Australian Labor Party and its local representatives, but also our broader community. Government members would agree that not too many people would have given 60 years continuous service to one organisation—an organisation that members on the Opposition benches know better than most is going through difficult times.

People like Joan Judge who, as a lifetime member, continue to attend branch meetings and contribute to the great Australian Labor Party are the sorts of people Labor needs as we get better and stronger on the journey forward. I am sure members on both sides of the House would honour and respect the work of someone who has been in a party, such as the ones we represent, over that period. She has doorknocked, she has stood at street stalls, and she has handed out how-to-vote cards for various candidates along the way. It is a tribute to the efforts of Joan Judge for our great party. It is an honour for me to represent her in this place, as I represent all the people in the Keira community.

Joan Judge stands tall when it comes to the traditional Labor values of a fair go, principles of social justice, determination to ensure that those in the community who are doing it tough get a voice in this place, and a fierce determination to ensure that services provided to the working-class communities, of which I am a part, are delivered in a timely fashion and an effective manner. It is a pleasure for me to acknowledge the work of Joan Judge. She is a giant in the Australian Labor Party in the area I represent. She is an outstanding individual. I admire her, and it is an honour to take a little time of the House to acknowledge her work. I wish her all the best for her continued membership of the great Australian Labor Party.

[Business interrupted.]

SOLAR INSTALLATIONS REVIEW

Ministerial Statement

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL (Ku-ring-gai—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) [4.01 p.m.], by leave: I wish to advise the House that the Government has received a report from the fair trading department into its review of solar installations in north-western Sydney. The findings of the report confirm the types of issues detected in the department's February audit in Port Macquarie. The full report will be released shortly, after discussions with industry. However, I stress that, of the 120,000 homes with solar installations, only two have experienced minor electrical fires in their fuse boxes. No other damage has been reported.

I am advised that the risk to householders appears to be very low. However, the Government is working with the solar industry on a program to provide advice and assistance to any householders who are concerned about their solar installations. I anticipate being able to provide further details of those arrangements next week. In the mean time it is important that any householders concerned about their installations contact an accredited installer and not in any circumstances seek to initiate their own checks or repairs.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

[Business resumed.]

LANE COVE ROTARY

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Fair Trading) [4.02 p.m.]: First, I congratulate the Acting-Speaker, the member for Kiama, not only on being elected with such a majority but also on the wonderful job he is doing. As for the private member's statement by the member for Keira, I pay tribute to Joan Judge for her work. Such contributions are a big part of our democratic process. Today I pay tribute to the great work done by the Rotary clubs in my electorate of Lane Cove. Rotary is a great volunteer organisation that works hard for the community, primarily by way of raising money for charitable causes. In my previous role as shadow Minister for Volunteering I was aware of the generous contribution of the 1.6 million unpaid volunteers towards helping those less fortunate in our communities.

All members know that volunteers are the unsung heroes of our communities, playing a vital role in so many areas and contributing more than 200 million hours annually. Every day, everywhere, people donate their time and resources, and at times they risk their lives to guide, help, assist and protect others. In paying tribute to the good work that Rotary clubs in my electorate are doing, I acknowledge a number of changes which are occurring, or which will shortly occur, due to official Rotary club changeovers. In respect of Lane Cove Rotary, on 5 July 2011 the current president of the Rotary Club of Lane Cove, Frank Rule, will hand over to president-elect, Martin Silink. President Frank Rule and the members of Lane Cove Rotary have donated more than \$50,000 to charity this year, and a cheque presentation night will be held on 28 June to recognise their good work.

Lane Cove Rotary held a successful art show last August, it organised the Lane Cove Village Fair last October, and it held a swimathon in April. The club also hosted an exchange student from Belgium and will receive a student from Finland shortly. Amazingly, Lane Cove Rotary also had time to hold a number of events to raise money for flood victims in Queensland, donating more than \$10,000. Martin Silink, AO, is a senior endocrinologist at the Westmead Children's Hospital and the immediate past president of the International Diabetes Federation. He will focus on a Healthy Lifestyle Program that will increase awareness of obesity and promote a healthy lifestyle for all in the community, adults and children alike.

Hunters Hill Rotary Club will have its changeover on Wednesday 27 July 2011 at the Gladesville Bowling and Sports Club, where incoming President-elect John Verhelst will be welcomed. The Hunters Hill club's major support this year was provided to a program and charity event called On Fire. Hunters Hill Rotary Club's contribution to On Fire is in association with NIB, the Schizophrenia Fellowship, the Institute of Mental Health, the University of Sydney and a number of professors of psychiatry. The project specifically assists children and youth where the parents or siblings have any form of mental health issues.

The club organised a Clash of the Codes evening between rugby union and rugby league at the Gladesville Sporties Club. It organised a New South Wales Car Safari travelling to the outback of New South

Wales by Rotary members and friends. The towns visited were Mudgee, Dubbo, Lightning Ridge, Bourke and Parkes. The club also held a golf day, donated shelter boxes to Christchurch, Japan and Haiti, donated the cost of three operations to Interplast and held a trivia night at Gladesville Sporties Club, benefitting Rotary's international health and education projects, with a special emphasis on a university in the Congo that has more than 7,000 students in four faculties.

The current president of Gladesville Rotary, Kevin Lance, will stay on as the president for another year. The club's changeover will be held at the Gladesville Bowling and Sports Club on Monday 4 July at 6.30 p.m. The Gladesville club is regularly involved in community service this year, and recently held a wrestling night and a trivia night, which I attended, to support local community projects.

Mr Nathan Rees: How did you go?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I pay tribute to the master of ceremonies, Mr Steven Sim, who is the master of master of ceremonies in this country. I note that the former Premier, the member for Toongabbie is in the House. I would love him to attend the next wrestling night as my guest. I think I have a yes. The Gladesville club also hosted two exchange students, one from Brazil and one from Taiwan. Furthermore, the Gladesville club has supported mental health programs and Rotary's Polio Plus Program to eradicate polio in the world, and it also recently collected \$16,000 for flood victims. Well done to the Gladesville Rotary. All these clubs in my electorate do wonderful work, and I commend and thank all incoming presidents and their teams. I wish them a strong and successful year ahead.

BOOMALLI ABORIGINAL ARTISTS COOPERATIVE ART EXHIBITION

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [4.07 p.m.]: On Tuesday evening I attended the opening of a new art exhibition at the Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Cooperative in Leichhardt in my electorate of Balmain. The theme of the exhibition is Home and the Rights of Indigenous People. It is presented by the students of Eora College and the Amnesty International Demand Dignity Action Group. It is an impressive exhibition of works by students of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Arts, investigating the understanding of home from their own perspective. The exhibition includes works by a number of students, including Haden Jennings, Graham Toomey, Megan Riley, Adam Bishop, Wanita Lowe, Sharon Smith, Esther Knox, Jeannie Hayes, Clinton Russell, Hazel Robinson, Stella Logan, Coral Dunn and Lynette Pitt, who explained her impressive art work in detail to me on the night.

Eora College is one of seven colleges of the Sydney Institute of TAFE. It is a community-focused education centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Taking its name from the Gadigal language of the Aboriginal nation that originally inhabited the Port Jackson area, the college offers courses in visual arts, music, television and film, theatre, Aboriginal community needs and basic literacy and numeracy. Its courses are aimed at high school leavers, senior school students, workers who want to improve their job skills, job seekers and students seeking to enter university. Eora College has a great record of success. Its graduates have built successful careers in areas as diverse as television production, stage management, television and stage performance, poetry, playwriting, animation and rock music, and are represented in many public and private art collections.

The work on display at this exhibition certainly continues that proud record of achievement. I commend the college, its students and its staff, particularly Chico Monk, teacher of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Arts, for this exhibition. I understand that Chico Monk has been at the college for almost 10 years, which is a wonderful contribution. The exhibition was also presented by the Amnesty International Demand Dignity Action Group, and I thank Ken Walsh and all the Amnesty supporters who were there on the night. Amnesty International's Demand Dignity campaign focuses on the human rights violations caused by poverty.

The campaign is based on the premise that every person, wherever they are in the world, has a basic right to an adequate standard of living—the right to food, water, housing, health and education. The Demand Dignity campaign seeks to hold national and international leaders accountable for the human rights violations that drive and deepen poverty, and to defend every person's right to live with dignity. I support Amnesty International's Demand Dignity campaign and call on governments at all levels to address the issues that contribute to ongoing poverty in Australia, particularly in Aboriginal communities.

I also acknowledge the contribution to the event of Bundjalung artist Bronwyn Bancroft, one of Australia's leading artists. I was pleased last weekend to attend the opening of the "Weavings of Light and Life"

public art installation, commissioned by Leichhardt Council in collaboration with the Leichhardt Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee. The installation has been created by Bronwyn Bancroft and is an outstanding feature of the newly upgraded Leichhardt Park Aquatic Centre. It features seven images that honour the past and show respect to the custodians of the land. The images are encased in glass that captures the changing light of the day. It is a work of great subtlety and beauty, and an outstanding piece of public art. Its presence in this prominent position at such a popular local facility shows respect for our Aboriginal community as well as encouraging non-Aboriginal members of the Leichhardt community to celebrate the extraordinary talent of our Aboriginal artists, and of Bronwyn Bancroft in particular.

Finally, I acknowledge the wonderful contribution of the Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Cooperative to the exhibition. The multi-talented printmaker, designer and sculptor Euphemia Bostock, a founding member of Boomalli and designer of its logo, welcomed us to country. Bronwyn Bancroft, whom I mentioned, was also a key member of the development of Boomalli. Boomalli's gallery and workshop space is located on Flood Street in Leichhardt. It started in 1987 and has continued to provide support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists so that they can exhibit, define and promote Aboriginal art with Aboriginal-endorsed guidance. The exhibition runs until Sunday 26 June. It provides a wonderful showcase for the students who have produced the outstanding works on display, which are available for sale. I commend this wonderful exhibition to all members of the House and acknowledge all those who have made a contribution to such a successful exhibition.

AUSTRALIAN BOCCE CHAMPIONSHIP 2011

Mr ANDREW ROHAN (Smithfield) [4.11 p.m.]: It seems that bocce is a very popular and important game. I am pleased to inform this House that on Friday 10 June 2011, I attended the opening of the Forty-first Australian Bocce Championship at Club Marconi, Bossley Park, in the electorate of Smithfield. Among the guests was the member for Fairfield, Guy Zangari. I must confess that prior to my attendance at this event I knew very little about the game of bocce and its significance in the community, especially within the Italian community in the electorate of Smithfield. I was grateful for the invitation to attend this event and to engage with some of the key people behind the drive to promote and sponsor the game and have the opportunity to see first-hand the importance of the game within the community.

The 2011 national championship games were played on Friday night and over the weekend from 10 to 13 June by teams from all States and Territories of Australia, which included men's and women's and senior and junior teams. While the event marked the forty-first men's national seniors' championship, it also marked the sixteenth women's championship in Australia. Bocce is an ancient sport. It is believed that the Egyptians were the first to play a game like bocce with polished rocks in about 5000 BC. It was played in Greece in around 800 BC, and later the Romans took up the game and spread it throughout the empire. The Romans named the game "bocce", which ultimately evolved into today's game.

The game of bocce came to Australia with the arrival of Italian immigrants in the 1950s. Early Italian settlers in the Fairfield area built bocce courts for locals to play and enjoy friendly matches on the weekends. The game continued to grow, and it was through bocce that the idea to establish a club to cater for the growing game was born and resulted in the establishment of Club Marconi in 1958. The game is played socially and at competitive levels by seniors and juniors, men and women. Today, bocce continues to be very much embedded within the sporting culture of Club Marconi, which proudly remains in the forefront of the game in Australia. The first bocce championship at Club Marconi was held in 1958. The game continued to grow throughout Australia, and the first national bocce championship was held in 1970.

The junior championship commenced in 1982 and the women's championship in 1995. Today, to my surprise, bocce is played in more than 80 countries. In 1974 the New South Wales Bocce Federation was established through clubs around Sydney such as APIA, Marconi, Dural Country Club, Fogolar Furlan and the Fraternity Club of Wollongong. Clubs such as Griffith, Newcastle and others joined soon after. In 1974 Australia joined the world body administering the game and participated for the first time in international bocce competitions. Today, world championships are held every two years and Australian teams regularly compete at these games. Representatives of bocce are currently lobbying to include the game as part of the bowls events in the 2020 Olympic Games.

At the opening of the event earlier this month, entertainment was provided by the marvellous Club Marconi Choir and the fabulous Liverpool Catholic Club Southern Cross Pipe Band. I congratulate Club Marconi on hosting the championships by providing the beautiful venue and also all the sponsors of the event. Some of the people who were involved in making these games a success included the Chairman of Club

Marconi, Mr Vince Foti; the President of the New South Wales Bocce Federation, Mr Fortunato Legato; the Sports President of Club Marconi, Mr Mario Soligo; the Vice-President of the Bocce Federation of Australia, Mr Raymond Cher; and the President of Club Italia, Mr Sergio Loretto. Finally, I would like to thank all the players, trainers and umpires for their valuable contribution at these championships, which were played in good spirit and to world-class and professional sporting and ethical standards.

TOONGABBIE SRI LANKAN COMMUNITY

Mr NATHAN REES (Toongabbie) [4.16 p.m.]: I speak today as the member for Toongabbie but also as the proud neighbour of thousands of Sri Lankan immigrants to Australia who, of all places in the world, have chosen to live in Toongabbie. I pay tribute to a number of them in particular, having attended with the Leader of the Opposition and member for Blacktown, John Robertson, Ed Husic, the Federal member for Chifley, and Michelle Rowland, the Federal member for Greenway, the Catholic Association of Sydney Tamils' twentieth birthday at the weekend at Bowman Hall in Blacktown. I pay tribute to Mr Anselm Jehenthira, who is the president of the organisation, Mr Seles Guraratnam, the secretary, and my good friend John Niven, of the association. The association has been providing assistance and support to Sri Lankan refugees and immigrants to Australia for 20 years.

The history of Sri Lanka is worth noting. It gained independence in 1948 and, almost alone amongst developing countries at the time, enjoyed a strong and efficient economy, an independent judiciary, and stability and democracy that have been all too rare among those nations. Regrettably, over the past decade in particular, we have seen civil war in Sri Lanka and a great deal of hurt and pain for the people of Sri Lanka. That culminated in 2009, with the deaths of some 10,000 civilians and Tamil Tigers over a four-month period, which was a bloody end to a very difficult civil conflict. There is now a new government in Sri Lanka, and one that many assert has been involved in war crimes.

Without going into that, I place on record that many in the Tamil community in Toongabbie have expressed to me that the time has come for Sri Lanka to become more transparent and accountable and that it is also time for the international community to ask the new Sri Lankan Government to step up to the plate on the hallmarks of modern democracies—transparency and accountability. I also pay tribute to Gordon Weiss, the former United Nations diplomat and spokesperson in Colombo. He was a close observer of those events in 2009. Finally, I say thank you to those Sri Lankans who have chosen Toongabbie, Sydney, Australia. Of all the places in the world they could have chosen to settle, they have chosen Toongabbie. I am delighted to be their neighbour.

Mr Lee Evans: The jewel of the west.

Mr NATHAN REES: The jewel of the west—well put, member for Heathcote. I am delighted they chose the jewel of the west to settle, not far from the Blue Mountains, which would have been almost as good. I thank them for their contribution to the community and for their commitment to education and to each other, in particular the seniors in their community, but also for their work ethic and general cheer. It has been extraordinarily courageous of them to choose Australia to embark on a new life. I will stand with them every step of the way as they go about creating a future for themselves, their children and their children's children.

OKAYAMA, JAPAN

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.20 p.m.]: I have great pleasure in speaking about the City of Bathurst and its relationship with its sister city Okayama in Japan. Okayama was devastated by the tsunami and the earthquake in March 2011. Okayama has had an ongoing relationship with Bathurst for the past 21 years. It was established when Anne Ashwood, a former mayor, took a delegation and met with mayor Shigeo and signed an agreement about the relationship. Over the years thousands of people from Bathurst have made a pilgrimage to Okayama and lots of opportunities have been shared between the two cities. Lots of friendships have been formed and relationships established during that time. Okayama has only 10,000 people and just under 2,000, 20 per cent, of its townsfolk have made their augural trip to Bathurst to share in cultural experiences.

The devastation occurred on 11 March 2011. The city was not devastated so much by the earthquake or the tsunami but because of its proximity—only three kilometres away—to the Fukushima nuclear power plant. People from Okayama have moved into the highlands or scattered all around Japan and moved in with various family members. The Bathurst community was so concerned that it formed a committee to discuss ways in

which it could assist the town of Okayama. I commend all the people who put their hand up in the Bathurst community to be a part of that committee. The owners of the local radio station, Ron and Stephanie Camlin, were heavily involved in the program along with the mayor, former mayors, councillors and members of the community who went on a fundraising pilgrimage to ensure that enough funds were raised to assist those people of Okayama in some way.

Government and non-government schools raised money, for example, by having money lines or food days to assist the people of Okayama. Raffles tickets were sold in the community. Already they have raised just under \$60,000 for the people of Okayama, which will be used to build new schools or to provide equipment for them. We know the people are struggling to rebuild their lives. We all know that they are 100 kilometres inland, well and truly away from home. We know that Chernobyl occurred in 1986, nearly 25 years ago and the site has never been revisited by its former community. The Fukushima disaster will have the same impact for the people of Okayama and it could be years, decades or centuries before they can move back to the town. Our thoughts go to the town of Okayama.

I pay tribute to a young lady named Emily Peck who was an English teacher in Okayama during the earthquake and tsunami. Fortunately, she got out of Okayama as quickly as possible and made her way back to Bathurst. Recently she was involved in a Rotary fundraiser dinner and spoke about the people of Okayama and her experiences there. I know that in July she will head back to Japan to visit the community, who are doing their very best to stay together, to see what she can do to assist them. Already Japan has suffered further aftershocks. We do not know what the future may hold for Okayama but I pay tribute to the community of Bathurst for raising those necessary funds to help the children of the town of Okayama.

L J HOOKER 5 TO 5 WALK-A-THON

Mr DARREN WEBBER (Wyong) [4.25 p.m.]: I acknowledge the L. J. Hooker 5 to 5 Walk-a-thon in support of the 2GOFM Give Me 5 for Kids fundraising efforts across June, also known as "Give me 5" month. The 5 to 5 Walk-a-thon was held at Terrigal Haven on Sunday 19 June 2011. People were urged to come along and walk for a great cause. In beautiful sunshine many enjoyed a barbecue, food and cake stalls, face painting and most importantly continuous walking for this tremendous cause. The 5 to 5 Walk-a-thon is part of 2GO's Give Me 5 for Kids which, over the past few years, has raised close to \$1 million for much-needed medical equipment and children's services at Wyong and Gosford hospitals, as well as supported a range of other local children's charities. The 5 to 5 Walk-a-thon is a great event and makes up part of the broader activities across the month of June.

Other fundraising events include the 2GO Give Me 5 for Kids Golf Day at the Kooindah Water Golf Course, in which nearly 200 people will participate; the Newcastle Permanent Fundraiser barbecue, which raised a further \$1,000; and the Winter Wonderland Gala Ball, which raised close to \$30,000 through its auction alone. In the 5 to 5 Walk-a-thon I am proud to have walked 10 laps of Terrigal Haven, which took just under an hour—my contribution to an effort with many others who together walked 12,000 kilometres, a distance greater than that between Wyong and Brisbane. I was pleased to walk around Terrigal Haven, as opposed to running up and down the landmark skillion, which I had to do in my old rugby days with the mighty Terrigal Trojans—an effort, I can tell you. The 5 to 5 Walk-a-thon raised in excess of \$40,060 but that amount is expected to grow with the buckets that kindly have been made available throughout businesses asking individuals to donate their loose change yet to be collected.

I note the contributions made by the broader community to the day. Without these efforts the day would not have been the success it was. In particular, credit must go to L. J. Hooker Wyong for its role in the sponsorship and organisation of the 5 to 5 Walk-a-thon. Prestige Party in Tuggerah donated the coolroom for the day and many cakes were donated by local bakeries and even baked by the staff of L. J. Hooker Wyong. Once again I congratulate all of those involved in the planning and running of L. J. Hooker 5 to 5 Walk-a-thon and the Give Me 5 for Kids fundraising efforts across the entire month of June. I wish them every success in their future efforts and look forward to supporting this grand cause in the future. I commend their efforts to the House.

ENGADINE ROTARY CLUB

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) [4.26 p.m.]: I commend the extraordinary generosity and sterling efforts of the members of Engadine Rotary Club, which was chartered in 1973 to engage and enrich its local community. Members have risen to the noble objectives of Rotary International over the years and, in many ways, have gone above and beyond it—truly putting service over self. This year the club celebrated its thirtieth

annual bike ride from Sydney to Surfers Paradise, which so far has raised more than \$1.2 million for Father Chris Riley's Youth off the Streets Program. A record number of 168 riders pedalled their way up the coast this year, with the help of 28 support volunteers, and the club managed to hand over a cheque for more than \$157,600.

Combined with more than \$61,600 donated directly by riders, the annual event raised an impressive total of \$219,232 for Youth off the Streets. Those hard earned funds will go directly to help some of the most vulnerable people in our State. The many hours these Rotarians spent planning, pedalling and donation seeking will help break the cycle of disadvantage, abuse and neglect suffered by homeless and disadvantaged youth. This is a truly fantastic result and every member who helped make this possible should be extremely proud. This shows just how much we can achieve when we work together for the genuine betterment of our communities. Father Chris Riley attended a special lunch at Engadine Bowling Club to thank the Rotary club.

This is only one of the vital programs that are run by Engadine Rotary Club. These dedicated Rotarians give up their precious free time to support the Sylvanvale Boys Town project, bushfire appeals, Clean Up Australia, Carols for the People, the Bowelscan program and the Salvation Army Doorknock Appeal, and to assist with business forums. These are only some of the community projects that are run by the club. The members also provided crucial aid to the Oro province of Papua New Guinea, which was devastated by Cyclone Guba, and they sent emergency relief ShelterBoxes to the disaster-affected areas of Sudan, Indonesia and Pakistan. They participate also in an educational youth exchange program.

One particularly important program that is run by the club is You Turn the Wheel. As a father of two young sons this program is especially relevant to me. It arranges for experienced speakers from the police, the Ambulance Service, the NRMA and YouthSafe to speak to young people about the impact of bad driving habits and poor road skills. Between 2007 and 2009 one-third of all fatal crashes on New South Wales roads involved young people. This is a statistic that we should not accept. Programs such as You Turn the Wheel are our best chance to ensure that young drivers are safe drivers. Engadine Rotary Club also conducts the Bowelscan program. This project provides scan kits and is designed to increase community awareness of bowel cancer. The Bowelscan program, which is run with the assistance of the Federal Government, is now one of Rotary's most successful programs.

Engadine Rotary Club is involved also in the ShelterBox program. Rotary delivers shelter boxes to countries around the world to provide shelter and aid to families of up to 10 people. Each shelter box, which costs \$2,500, provides shelter and warmth to an extended family of 10, as well as food, cooking utensils and other life-saving equipment. Rotary provides shelter boxes to disaster areas, such as Japan, and is an effective way for it to offer assistance to people in crisis through its hard-earned savings. I wholeheartedly applaud the Engadine Rotary Club and all its members on their achievements. Our community in the Heathcote electorate is the richer for having this club. If there were more people like these dedicated Rotarians the world would be a better place.

Private members' statements concluded.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICE

Appointment and Membership

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): I report the receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:

Madam SPEAKER

The Legislative Council desires to inform the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution:

- (1) that this House agrees to the resolution in the Legislative Assembly's message of Thursday 23 June 2011 relating to the appointment of a Joint Select Committee on the Parliamentary Budget Office;
- (2) that the representatives of the Legislative Council on the Joint Select Committee on the Parliamentary Budget Office be Ms Amanda Fazio, Mr Eric Roozendaal, Dr John Kaye, Mrs Sarah Mitchell and Mrs Natasha Maclaren-Jones; and
- (3) that the time and place for the first meeting be Thursday 23 June 2011 at 4.30 p.m. in Room 1136.

Legislative Council
23 June 2011

DON HARWIN
President

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

Chairs and Deputy Chairs

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2) the following members were elected as the chair and deputy chair respectively of the following committees on 22 June 2011:

Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics

Chair: Mr Anthony John Sidoti
Deputy Chair: Mr Andrew Raymond Gordon Fraser

Legal Affairs Committee

Chair: Mr Dominic Francis Perrottet
Deputy Chair: Mr Bryan Michael Doyle

Social Policy Committee

Chair: Mr Bruce Neville Notley-Smith
Deputy Chair: Mr Anthony John Sidoti

State and Regional Development Committee

Chair: Mr Geoffrey Keith Provest
Deputy Chair: Mr Christopher Edward Spence

Legislative Assembly Committee on Economic Development

Chair: Mr David Andrew Elliot
Deputy Chair: Mr Stuart Lawrence Ayres

Legislative Assembly Committee on Community Services

Chair: Mr Kevin John Anderson
Deputy Chair: Mr Kevin Francis Conolly

Legislative Assembly Committee on Transport and Infrastructure

Chair: Mr Charles Casuscelli
Deputy Chair: Mr Timothy Francis Owen

Legislative Assembly Committee on Environment and Regulation

Chair: Mr Christopher Stewart Patterson
Deputy Chair: Mrs Tanya Davies

Public Accounts Committee

Chair: Mr Jonathan O'Dea
Deputy Chair: Dr Geoffrey Lee

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

Chairs and Deputy Chairs

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2) the following members were elected as the chair and deputy chair respectively of the following committees on 23 June 2011:

Committee on the Office of the Ombudsman and the Police Integrity Commission

Chair: The Hon. Catherine Eileen Cusack, MLC
Deputy Chair: Mr Lee Justin Evans

Committee on the Health Care Complaints Commission

Chair: Mrs Leslie Gladys Williams
Deputy Chair: Mrs Roza Eva Maria Sage

Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters

Chair: The Hon. Trevor John Khan, MLC
Deputy Chair: The Hon. Robert Borsak, MLC

Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety

Chair: Mr Gregory John Aplin
Deputy Chair: The Hon. Richard Hargrave Colless, MLC

Joint Standing Committee on the Office of the Valuer-General

Chair: Mr Matthew John Kean

MARINE PARKS AMENDMENT (MORATORIUM) BILL 2011**Bill received from the Legislative Council and introduced.**

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): I advise the House that I have received a written authority from the Hon. Robert Brown, MLC, advising that the member for Northern Tablelands will have carriage of the bill in this House.

Agreement in principle set down as an order of the day for a future day.**COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE****Membership**

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): I report the receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:

Madam SPEAKER

The Legislative Council desires to inform the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution:

That Mrs Pavey be discharged from the Committee on Children and Young People and Mr Blair be appointed as a member of the committee.

Legislative Council
23 June 2011-06-27

DON HARWIN
President

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 4.36 p.m. until
Tuesday 2 August 2011 at 1.00 p.m.**
